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PLAYS OF TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*THE LOWER DEPTHS*

## Plays of To-day and To-morrow

### **DON.** By RUDOLF BESIER.

"Mr Besier is a man who can see and think for himself, and constructs as setting for the result of that activity a form of his own. The construction of 'Don' is as daring as it is original"—Mr Max Beerbohm in *The Saturday Review*

"It is a fresh and moving story and full of good things."—Mr A B Walkley in *The Times*

"'Don' is a genuine modern comedy, rich in observation and courage, and will add to the author's reputation as a sincere dramatist"—Mr E F Spence in *The Westminster Gazette*

### **THE EARTH.** By JAMES B FAGAN.

"A magnificent play—at one and the same time a vital and fearless attack on political fraud, and a brilliantly-written strong human drama"—*The Daily Chronicle*

"'The Earth' must conquer every one by its buoyant irony, its pungent delineations, and not least by its rich stores of simple and wholesome moral feeling"—*The Pall Mall Gazette*

### **LADY PATRICIA.** By RUDOLF BESIER

"One of the most delightful productions which the stage has shown us in recent years Mr Besier's work would 'read deliciously', it is literary, it is witty, it is remarkable 'Lady Patricia' is much more than merely a success of laughter It is also a success of literature It is difficult if not impossible, to convey the delicate feeling for words, the quaint, satirical quizzing of Mr Besier of the *précieux*, the dabblers in sentiment, the *poseurs* who form the people of his play"—*The Standard*

### **THE MASTER OF MRS. CHILVERS.**

By JEROME K JEROME

"It cannot be denied that Mr Jerome has written an excellent acting play"—*Glasgow Herald*

"There is no caricature of the suffragist, and every type in the play is both carefully and skilfully drawn"—*Aberdeen Free Press*

### **THE WATERS OF BITTERNESS**

(A Play in Three Acts) and **THE CLOD-HOPPER** (An Incredible Comedy)

By S M FOX

"I am inclined to think that we shall hear a great deal of Mr Fox—supposing that Mr Fox writes other plays as clever as 'The Waters of Bitterness,' and supposing that managers think the public clever enough to appreciate them Anyhow his is a strong and bold debut"—Mr Max Beerbohm in *The Saturday Review*

LONDON T FISHER UNWIN  
NEW YORK DUFFIELD & CO

~~THE~~  
*LOWER DEPTHS*

*A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS*

BY  
*MAXIM GORKY*

*TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN*

BY  
*LAURENCE IRVING*

*LONDON. T. FISHER UNWIN,  
ADELPHI TERRACE*

*First Edition, June, 1912*  
*Second Impression, August, 1912*

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## PERSONS IN THE PLAY

MIKHAIL IVANOFF KOSTOLOFF	54 years old	Keeper of a night shelter
-		
VASSILISA KARPOVNA	26	His wife
NATASHA	20	Her sister
MYEDVYEDYEFF	50	Her uncle, a policeman
VASKA PEPEL	28	
ANDREE MITRITCH KLESSHTSH	40.	A locksmith
ANNA	30	His wife
NASTYA	24	A street walker
KVASHNYA	A woman under 40	A hawker of meat pies
BOOBNOFF	45	
THE BARON	32	
SATINE	}	Both of about the same age— under 40
THE ACTOR		
LUKA	60	A pilgrim
ALYOSHKA	20	A bootmaker
WHEN	}	Carters
THE TARTAR		

Several unnamed TATTERED FALIONS who do not speak



**The Cast of "The Lower Depths," as it was produced  
at the Kingsway Theatre, London, on December  
2, 1911**

Luka  
Vassilisa  
Vaska Pepel  
Natasha  
The Actor  
Anna  
Satine  
Nastya  
The Baron  
Kvashnya  
Boobnoff  
Kleeshtsh  
Myedvyedyeff  
Kostoloff  
The Taitar  
Alyoshka  
When

HOLMAN CLARKE  
FRANCES WETHFRALL  
O P HEGGIE  
JEAN BLOOMFIELD  
LEWIS WILLOUGHBY  
HAIDEE WRIGHT  
HERBERT BUNSTON  
LYDIA YAVORSKA  
VINCENT CLIVE  
CLARE GREET  
E H BROOKE  
C F COLLINGS  
ALBAN ATTWOOD  
J H BREWFR  
IVAN BERLYN  
RICHARD NEVILLE  
SIDNEY TEVERSHAM



## **THE FIRST ACT.**



## THE FIRST ACT

SCENE — *A cave-like cellar The ceiling is arched, grimy, with the plaster peeling off. The light comes from a square window high up in the right wall The right corner is partitioned off with thin boards, it forms PEPER'S room Close to the door of this room are BOOBNOFF'S sleeping-planks In left corner is a large Russian stove, in the stone wall left is the kitchen door, where KVASHNYA, the BARON, and NASTYA live Against the wall, between the stove and the door, is a large bed with dirty print curtains Sleeping-planks around the walls To the front by the left wall is a block of wood with a vice, and an anvil, also another lower block of wood*

*(On the lower block KLESSHTSH is seated trying keys into old locks At his feet are two large bundles of miscellaneous keys, strung on wire rings, a battered tin samovar, hammer, and pincers In the middle of the shelter are a large table, two seats, a stool, all dirty and of plain wood KVASHNYA is behind the table attending to the samovar, the BARON is chewing some black bread, and NASTYA*

*is on the stool, leaning her elbow on the table, reading a tattered book In the bed, behind the curtains, ANNA lies coughing. BOOBNOFF is seated on his planks with an old hat shape between his knees, considering how he shall deal with a pair of unstitched old trousers Scattered about him are a couple of vizors, some pieces of buckram, a rag SATINE has only just gone off to sleep on his planks, he grunts in his sleep The ACTOR, out of sight, tosses about on the stove and coughs )*

*(It is an early spring morning )*

THE BARON

And after !

KVASHNYA

No, says I, no, dearie, just you stow it, says I ,  
I've tried it, you see and it's no more  
marriages for me !

BOOBNOFF

*(To SATINE )* Stop that giunting !

KVASHNYA

What for, says I , me a free woman, my own  
mistress—what for should I go and give up my  
passport and saddle myself with a husband—no !  
I wouldn't marry no man—let alone one of them  
American Princes, that I wouldn't !

KLESSHTSH

You lie !

KVASHNYA

What-at?

KLESSHTSH

You lie ! You'll marry Abramka

THE BARON

(*Reading the title of the book he has snatched away from NASTYA* ) "The Fatal Love" . . .  
(*He laughs* )

NASTYA

(*Extending hand* ) Give now give it  
stop fooling !

(*The BARON flourishes the book in the air* )

KVASHNYA

(*To KLESSHTSH* ) You red goat, you—telling  
me ! he ! Just don't you dare to give me none of  
them coarse words

THE BARON

(*Striking the book on NASTYA'S head* ) Nastya,  
you little fool !

NASTYA

Give it here.

KLESSHTSH

Quite the fine lady But you'll be married  
to Abramka and you know you're just  
dying to . . .



## THE LOWER DEPTHS

KYASHNYA

Aren't you clever ! I just see myself . . . you  
as 'as done your wife nearly to death.

KLESSHTSH.

Stop it, you hag ! Tain't no affair of  
yours. . .

KVASHNYA

Ah, ha, you can't stand the truth !

THE BARON

They're started Nastya, where are you?

ANNA.

*(Putting her head through the curtains.)*  
Morning at last ! For Heaven's sake don't shout  
. . stop quarrelling

KLESSHTSH

Moaning—moaning

ANNA.

Every blessed day                      Might let me die in  
peace.

BOOBNOFF

Noise ain't no 'indrance to dying.

KVASHNYA

*(Approaching ANNA )* 'Ow yer ever 'ave  
managed, you poor soul, to live with such a beast?

ANNA

'Don't . . don't

KVASHNYA

Well, well ! You're such a patient thing . . .  
Ain't the chest no easier ?

THE BARON.

Kvashnya ! Time for market

KVASHNYA

Just a second ! (To ANNA ) 'Ud yer like  
some of my 'ot pies ?

ANNA

No, no                    thanks    Why should I eat ?

KVASHNYA

Must eat    'Ot ones—soothing    I'll leave you  
some in a cup                    then when you feel like  
it, yer gobble it up ! Come on, Baron  
(To KLESSHTSH ) Er—you dirty beast !

(Goes into kitchen )

ANNA.

(Coughing ) Lord, Lord

THE BARON

(Softly nudging NASTYA'S elbow ) Chuck it  
. . yer silly !

NASTYA

(Growls ) Do go.                    I let you alone

(THE BARON goes out after KVASHNYA,  
whistling.)

SATINE.

(*Sitting up on his planks.*) Can't think who it was that pummelled me yesterday?

BOOBNOFF

Does it matter much 'oo it was?

SATINE.

Leave it at that . But what was it for, though?

BOOBNOFF

Was yer playin' cards?

SATINE.

Played

BOOBNOFF

Well, then, that's 'ow it was .

SATINE.

The blackguards.

THE ACTOR.

(*Raising his head from the stove*) One of these days you'll get such a real pummelling—a pummelling to death

SATINE

Don't talk rot

THE ACTOR.

Why rot?

SATINE.

Because . . a man 'can't die twice over.

THE ACTOR.

(*After a silence.*) What do you mean? How can't he?

KLESSHTSH

Come down off that stove, and sweep up  
What are yer shamming there?

THE ACTOR

That's none of your business.

KLESSHTSH.

Wait till Vassilisa comes—she'll soon show yer  
yours

THE ACTOR.

Vassilisa can go to the devil It's the Baron's  
day to sweep Baron!

(*BARON coming out from the kitchen.*)

THE BARON

I've no time for sweeping . I'm off to  
market with Kvashnya

THE ACTOR.

For all I care . . you may be going to jail  
. . It's your turn to sweep . and I'm not  
on to doing other people's jobs. .

THE BARON

Oh, go to blazes! Let Nastya do it. . . Hi,  
you there, fatal love! Buck up! (*Takes book  
from NASTYA.*)

NASTYA

(*Getting up* ) What now? Give it here ! You puppy ! And you call yerself a gentleman. . .

THE BARON

(*Giving back the book* ) Nastya ! You're going to sweep up for me—understood ?

NASTYA

(*Going into kitchen* ) Likely indeed  
What next !

KVASHNYA

(*To BARON through kitchen door* ) Now come on ! They can do it without you . Actor ! you was asked—you do it it won't kill yer !

THE ACTOR.

Yes it's always me I don't see it. . .

(*BARON comes out of kitchen carrying some earthen pots strung on a pole and covered with rags* )

THE BARON

A bit heavy to-day

SATINE.

Fat lot of good being born a Baron, I don't think ! . . .

KVASHNYA.

(*To ACTOR* ) Just you be sure and sweep up !  
(*Goes off pushing the BARON before her.*)

THE ACTOR.

(*Coming down from stove.*) It's harmful for me to inhale the dust. (*With pride*) My organism is poisoned with alcohol . . . (*Seated meditating on planks*)

SATINE.

Organism . . . organon

ANNA.

Andree Mitritch

KLESSHTSH

Well, what?

ANNA.

Left some pies for me Kvashnya did—you have them

KLESSHTSH

(*Approaching ANNA*) Well, won't you?

ANNA.

No, no . . . Why should I eat? You've to work, you . . . you need it

KLESSHTSH

Frightened? Don't be frightened . . . might get all right . . .

ANNA.

Go and eat! In a bad way . . . all over soon. . .

KLESSHTSH.

Come, come—you never know . . . may pull round . . . such things happen !

*(Goes into kitchen.)*

THE ACTOR

*(Loud, as if he had suddenly woken up.)*  
Yesterday in the hospital, the doctor he said to me "Your organism," he said, "is thoroughly poisoned with alcohol"

SATINE

*(Smiling )* Organon.

THE ACTOR.

Not organon—or-ga-nism

SATINE

Sicambri

THE ACTOR

*(Waving his hand at him )* Oh, rubbish ! I say this, and seriously If the organism is poisoned . why, then it must be harmful for me to sweep the floor—to inhale the dust . . .

SATINE

Macrobistik                      ha !

THE ACTOR

What are you muttering ?

SATINE.

Words . here's another for you—transcendentalistic. . .

BOOBNOFF.

What does it mean ?

SATINE.

Don't know . . . forgotten

BOOBNOFF.

What are you coming at ?

SATINE

Just so . . . I'm tired, mate, of all our human  
speech . . . all of our words . . . I'm sick of 'em  
I've heard 'em every single one . . . at least a  
thousand times . . .

THE ACTOR.

In the play of " Hamlet " they say " Words,  
words, words ! " It's a good piece . . . I  
played the grave-digger .

*(KLESSHTSH coming from the kitchen )*

KLESSHTSH

Let's see how you play with that broom

THE ACTOR

Keep to your own business . . . *(Strikes his  
chest )* Ophelia ! O . . . think of me in thy  
prayers !

*(In the distance is heard a dull murmur,  
cries, and a police whistle KLESSHTSH  
sits down to his work, and scrapes away  
with a file.)*

SATINE.

I love difficult, rare words    When I was a  
little chap            I was in a telegraph office . .  
read a heap of books    . . .

BOOBNOFF.

Did you work the telegraph?

SATINE

I did            There are some very good books  
                 . and quantities of curious words            I've  
received an education            see?

BOOBNOFF

You don't let one forget it! Much good it'd  
done yer! Now I—I was a fur-dyer            . had  
a place of my own            'ands all yaller—with  
the dye dyed 'em this and dyed 'em that 'ands  
all yaller right up to the elbows! "Well," I  
thought, "I shall never get 'em clean in this  
world            I shall just die with these 'ere yaller  
'ands "            But look at 'em now, there's only  
dirt on 'em            nothing else

SATINE

Well, what of it?

BOOBNOFF

That's just all about it .

SATINE

What are you talking about?

BOOBNOFF.

Just so . . just comparing . It shows  
yer whatever you does to the outside it all comes  
off . . it all comes off, ay, ay

SATINE

Ah my bones are aching !

THE ACTOR

(*Seated nursing his knee*) Education's bosh,  
the great thing is talent I knew an actor .  
had to spell out his parts, but he played heroes in  
a way that why, the theatre would just rock  
with the delight of the audiences

SATINE

Boobnoff, lend us five kopyeks ?

BOOBNOFF

All I have's two

THE ACTOR

I say to play heroes you must have  
talent And talent's just belief in yourself, in  
your own powers

SATINE

Give me five kopyeks and I'll have belief in  
you , I'll believe you a hero, a crocodile, a police  
inspector . Klesshtsh, five kopyeks !

KLESSHTSH

Go to hell ! The whole pack of you !

SATINE.

What are you cursing at? You haven't got a stiver in the world—I know yer!

ANNA

Andree Mitritch                      I'm choking .                      I  
can't breathe!

KLESSHTSH

What can I do?

BOOBNOFF

Open the passage door!

KLESSHTSH

Thanks      Nice for you up there, I've to be  
on the floor                      if I was in your place I'd say  
"Open it"                      I'm cold enough without no  
door open

BOOBNOFF

It wasn't for me                      it was for yer wife

KLESSHTSH

(*Sulkily*)      Makes no odds who it's for

SATINE

My head's all buzzing                      Eh                      why  
must people be thumping each other's heads?

BOOBNOFF.

Not only each other's heads, but all over each  
other's 'ole bodies ( *Gets up* )      Goin' to buy

some thread                    they're late in showin' up to-day our losses !

(Goes out )

(ANNA coughs   SATINE lies motionless, with his hands folded behind his head )

THE ACTOR

(After a melancholy look round, approaching ANNA )   Feeling bad, eh ?

ANNA

the choking

THE ACTOR

Would you like to go out into the passage ? Up you get, then   (*He helps her to rise, pulls a kind of shawl round her shoulders, and supports her towards the passage* )   Ay—ay                    it's a job I'm ill myself—poisoned with alcohol

(KOSTOLOFF in doorway )

KOSTOLOFF

Having a stroll ?

*Here's a very pretty pair,  
Gallant knight and lady fair*

THE ACTOR

Get on one side there                    way for the invalids !

KOSTOLOFF

Pass out, pass out                    (He hums an anthem)

*tune, glances round suspiciously, and inclines his head to the L as if he were listening for something in PEPEL'S room )*

*(Exeunt ACTOR and ANNA )*

*(KLESSHTSH is jangling his keys and scraping away with his file )*

How you squeak !

KLESSHTSH

What d'you say ?

KOSTOLOFF

I say you squeak *(Pause)* Er . There was something I wanted to ask you *(Quick and low)* Wife not been here ?

KLESSHTSH

Ain't seen her

KOSTOLOFF

*(Carefully approaching the door of PEPEL'S room )* It's a lot of room that you take up for your rouble a month The bed and then where you sit hum, yes ! Five roubles' worth of room as Heaven's above us I shall have to stick you on half a rouble

KLESSHTSH

You'd put a rope round my neck, and strangle me . You're near the grave, and you think of nothing but half-roubles .

KOSTOLOFF

Why strangle you? What were the use of that?  
Live in the Lord, live and prosper But I  
shall have to stick you on half a rouble—'ave to  
buy oil for the sacred lamp that it may  
burn before the Holy Ikons in atonement of my  
sins . And my sins will be forgiven me,  
and yours too Your sins you don't think about  
no, verily Oh, Andrushka, you are  
a wicked man! Your wife is perishing through  
your wickedness no one loves you, nor  
esteems you your work is squeaky, dis-  
turbng to everybody

KLESSHTSH

What do you come here for—baiting me?  
(SATINE gives a loud growl )

KOSTOLOFF

(With a start ) Lord, there's a noise for  
you . . .  
(The ACTOR entering )

THE ACTOR

I've sat her down in the passage, and wrapped  
her up.

KOSTOLOFF

Here's what I call a real good fellow There  
are good deeds They shall all be paid back  
to you

THE ACTOR.

When?

KOSTOLOFF

In the other world, my boy            there all,  
every one of our acts, they shall all be reckoned  
up. . . .

THE ACTOR

Suppose you were to reward me for my goodness  
down here .

KOSTOLOFF

How can I do that?

THE ACTOR

Wipe out half my debt

KOSTOLOFF

He—he ! You are always joking, my dear boy,  
—always poking fun            Is the goodness of  
the heart to be paid for in money? Goodness—  
is above all other gifts But your debt to me—  
that is            your debt to me And accordingly  
you should pay me back            Doing me good  
for its own sake, to me, who am an old man

THE ACTOR

Old man—you old rogue ! . . .

*(Goes into the kitchen )*

*(KLESSHTSH gets up and goes into the  
passage )*

KOSTOLOFF

• The squeaker—he's hooked it    He—he ! He  
has no love for me            .

SATINE

Who but the Devil does love you?

KOSTOLOFF.

Oh, you've a bad tongue ! Yet I love all of you I see that you are my poor, down-trodden, useless, fallen brothers . (Suddenly and rapidly ) And Vaska . . is he at home ?

SATINE

Look .

(Going to the door and knocking at it )  
Vaska !

(THE ACTOR appears at the kitchen door, chewing something )

PEPEL.

Who is it ?

KOSTOLOFF

It's me me, Vaska !

PEPEL

What d'you want ?

KOSTOLOFF

(Bawling back) Open !

SATINE

(Without looking at KOSTOLOFF ) He opens, and there she'll be

(THE ACTOR makes a grimace )

KOSTOLOFF

(Low, anxiously ) Eh ? Who'll be there ?  
What do you mean ?

30 . THE LOWER DEPTHS

SATINE.

What's that? Are you asking me?

KOSTOLOFF

What did you say?

SATINE.

I was just            talking to myself

KOSTOLOFF

Look here, my friend! Don't get too funny  
see! (*Bangs on the door*) Vassili!

PEPEL

(*Opening door*) Now, then? What's up?

KOSTOLOFF

(*Looking into the room*) I            you see  
.    you

PEPEL

'Ave yer brought the money?

KOSTOLOFF

I wanted to tell you

PEPEL

Where is—the money?

KOSTOLOFF

What money?

PEPEL

Why, the seven roubles for the watch—now?

**KOSTOLOFF.**

What watch, Vaska? What a fellow you are!

PEPEL

You're a good 'un ! Yesterday, before witnesses, I sold you a ticker for ten roubles three I had—the seven—fork it up ! What are yer blinking for ? You prowl about waking people up . and now you don't know yourself what you're after

KOSTOLOFF.

Sh—sh ! Don't get angry, Vaska                      The  
watch, you see—it was .

PEPEL

Stolen .

KOSTOLOFF

(*Sternly*) I receive no stolen goods  
that you should think—

PEPEL

(Taking him by the shoulder) Now, what did you disturb me for? What is it you want?

KOSTOLOFF

I don't want—nothing      I'll be off—if  
you're going to

PEPEL

Be off, and bring the money !

KOSTOLOFF

A dreadful surly lot ! Who ever did !  
(Goes off )

THE ACTOR.

It's a farce they're playing.

SATINE

Good I like farce . .

PEPEL

What was he after, eh?

SATINE.

(*Smiling*) You don't know? He's after his wife why don't you settle him, Vaska?

PEPEL

Risk my life for a thing like that .

SATINE

You're a sharp lad. Then—why shu'd marry Vassilisa and become our boss

PEPEL

You are good ! Why, you'd just fatten on me ; I'm a soft-hearted fool, you'd drink away every farthing I had (*Sits on the planks*) The old devil woke me up I was having a fine dream , I was fishing, I'd caught a pro-digious bream ! Never saw such a one out of a dream There I had him on my hook, and I was just dreading—"the line'll snap !" I'd just got out the gaff and I was thinking to myself, now in a moment

SATINE.

That weren't no bream, it was Vassilisa. . .

THE ACTOR.

He hooked Vassilisa long ago .

PEPEL.

(*Angrily* ) You can all go to the devil  
and you can take her with you !

(*KLESSHTSH coming out of the passage* )

KLESSHTSH

Cold . devilish cold

THE ACTOR .

Have you left Anna out there? She'll  
freeze

KLESSHTSH

Natasha 'as taken 'er with 'er into the  
kitchen

THE ACTOR

The old man'll put her out

KLESSHTSH

(*Sitting down to his work* ) Hum  
Natasha'll see to her

SATINE

Vaska ! Let's have five kopeys .

THE ACTOR

You you and your five kopeys . .  
Give us twenty kopeys •

PEPEL

I'd best hurry up                      or you'll be wantin' a  
rouble                      There !

SATINE

Gee-bral-tar-r ! Crooks are the best folk in  
the world

KLESSHTSH

(*Grumbling* ) Their money's easily come by  
they don't work

SATINE

Heaps come by their money easily, there's  
precious few to part with it easily                      Work?  
You make your work so that it's pleasant to me,  
and I don't say I won't work                      I might !  
When your work's a pleasure, life's jolly then  
When it's a toil, a duty, then life's slavery ! (*To*  
*the* ACTOR ) Here, Sardanapalus ! Come  
on

THE ACTOR

Come on, Nebuchadnezzar ! I'm going to swill  
it down like forty thousand drunkards

(*They go out* )

PEPEL

(*Yawning* ) Well, and 'ow's yer wife ?

KLESSHTSH

She ain't for long                      (*Pause* )

PEPEL

Yer know I look at you—there's no good in all  
that scraping

KLESSHTSH.

What should I do?

PEPEL

Nothing

KLESSHTSH

'Ow should I live?

PEPEL

People manage

KLESSHTSH

Them? Call them people? Rabble, muck—  
people! I'm a working man I'm ashamed  
even to look at 'em I've worked since I was  
a child D'you think I shan't get clear of  
all this? I shall, if I leaves all my skin behind  
me just you wait my wife, she'll die

I've been here six months, but it seems  
more like six years

PEPEL

There's no one here any worse than you  
say what yer like

KLESSHTSH

No worse! They 'aven't no honour nor no  
conscience

PEPEL

(*Indifferently*) Much good of them—honour,  
conscience! Can you get 'em on to your feet in-

stead of boots—honour and conscience? Honour and conscience does mighty well for them as 'as the power and the strength . .

BOOBNOFF

(*Re-entering*) Ooh ! bitter

PEPEL

Boobnoff ! Got a conscience?

BOOBNOFF

What for? A conscience?

PEPEL

That's just it

BOOBNOFF

What 'ud I do with a conscience? I ain't no rich man

PEPEL.

That's what I say honour and conscience they're for the rich, yes ! Here's Klesshtsh lettin' it into us , says we ain't no consciences

BOOBNOFF

Why, is 'e wantin' to borrow some?

PEPEL

'E 'as 'is own supply

BOOBNOFF

Oh, then 'e's sellin' off Won't find no market here Now, if it was old cardboard I'd take some of it on account ' .

PEPEL.

(*Didactically.*) You are an ass, Andruishka !  
Just you let Satine talk to you about consciences  
. or try the Baron

KLESSHTSH.

D'you think I'd talk to sich !

PEPEL

They've better 'eads than yours for all  
their drinking

BOOBNOFF

*'E that can be drunk and wise  
'E's a man a man should prize*

PEPEL

Satine says, every man wants a conscience in  
his neighbour, but 'e says, no man wants one in  
'isself and that's a fact

(*NATASHA comes in After her, LUKA with  
a staff, a pack over his shoulder, a  
kettle and a teapot at his waist* )

LUKA

Give you good-day, honest people !

PEPEL

(*Twisting his moustache* ) Ah, Natasha !

BOOBNOFF

(*To LUKA* ) I was honest up to last spring  
year . . .

NATASHA.

See, here's a new room-mate. . . .

LUKA.

Oh, it's all one to me ! Sharpers—I respect 'em, too There's no two sorts for me , all just fleas . all little black fellows all hopping about tha-t's the way Show me, dearie, where shall I squeeze myself ?

NATASHA

(*Pointing to kitchen door* ) Go over there, daddy

LUKA

Thanks, girlie dear ! It's all just a place Where the old man's warm, there the old man's happy

PEPEL

A wonderful little old boy that you've brought us, Natasha

NATASHA

A sight more interestin' than you Andree ! We've got yer wife in the kitchen just you come and fetch 'er

KLESSHTSH

Right I'm coming

NATASHA.

And you might try and be kinder to 'er. . . .  
She hasn't much longer ' .

KLESSHTSH.

I know. . . .

NATASHA.

You know . . . There's no good in knowing,  
the thing is to do . . . Ah, it's a fearful thing to  
die.

PEPEL

See me . . . I'm not afraid . . .

NATASHA

Oh, you're a marvel, aren't you?

BOOBNOFF

(*Whistling* ) Um . . . sticky thread . . .

PEPEL

God's truth, I'm not afraid! This very  
moment—I'm ready to die . . . Take a knife, plunge  
it into my heart . . . I'll die—without a sound  
And gladly, too, for I should fall by a pure  
hand

NATASHA

(*Going out* ) Keep your soft soap for them  
as likes it

BOOBNOFF

Um . . . sticky . . . sticky

NATASHA

(*By the passage door* ) Don't forget, Andru-  
ishka, about your wife .

KLESSHTSH.

All right !

PEPEL

There's a fine girl !

BOOBNOFF.

Ay, the girl's all right

PEPEL

Why's she so short with me? Why? Ah, well,  
she's bound to come to grief here

BOOBNOFF

You'll bring her to grief

PEPEL

What do you mean—I? I'm sorry for her

BOOBNOFF

Like the wolf for the lamb .

PEPEL

You liar ! I *am* right down sorry for her. . .  
She 'as a 'ard life 'ere I see

KLESSHTSH

Wait till Vassilisa spots you gabbing with  
her. . .

BOOBNOFF

Vassilisa? M'yes, she ain't one to let 'er own  
go . . . She's a fierce woman . . .

PEPEL.

(*Lying on the planks*) Go to the devil . . .  
yer croakers !

KLESSHTSH.

You'll see—wait a bit !

(*LUKA from the kitchen, singing :*)

*Through the night we trudge along,  
Dark as night is all around .*

KLESSHTSH

O Lord !            another shouter

PEPEL

I'm bored            Why do I get this boredom ?  
All's going along well    Then all of a sudden,  
yer kind of dry up and it all gets tiresome

BOOBNOFF

Tiresome ?    Hum

PEPEL

Ay—ay

LUKA

(*Sings* )

*All the road is dark before*

PEPEL.

Old man !    Hi !

(*LUKA appearing in the door* )

LUKA

Call me?

PEPEL.

Don't sing !

LUKA

You don't like it?

PEPEL

When it is good singing, I like it .

LUKA

That's to say, then, mine isn't good?

PEPEL

You've hit it

LUKA

There now ! I *did* think I could sing That's just always the way a man he goes along thinking now this is something I *can* do And suddenly folks seem not to care for it

PEPEL

(*Smiling* ) Yes, that's the way

BOOBNOFF

Say you're bored, and now you're laughing . .

, PEPEL.

Let me alone, you crow .

LUKA.

Who is it says they're bored?

PEPEL

Me            here

*(Re-enter the BARON )*

LUKA

There now ! There's a girlie there in the kitchen, sitting there, and reading a book, and she's crying ! That she is ! The tears are flowing I says to her, " Why, my pet, what is it all, eh ? " " Oh," she says, " it's so sad ! " " What is it," I says, " that's sad ? " " Here," she says, " in the book " And that's how people pass their time, eh ? It's all from this boredom

THE BARON

That's girl's a fool

PEPEL

Baron ! Had your tea ?

THE BARON

Had it.            What then ?

PEPEL.

What d'you say—'ud you like me to stand yer half a bottle ?

THE BARON

What do *you* think ! . . . What then?

PEPEL.

Go down on all fours, and bark like a dog !

THE BARON

Fool ! What are yer talking about? Are yer drunk?

PEPEL

Bark—go on ! That'll amuse me                      you're  
a gentleman    There was a time you thought  
yourself better than your brother man                      and  
all the rest of it

THE BARON.

Well, what then?

PEPEL

What ! Why now I make you bark like a dog,  
and you've got to do it—are yer going to?

THE BARON

And if I do    And where's your gain if you  
do know that I've fallen even below you? You  
made me go an all fours when I was above you

BOORNOFF

That's true !

LUKA

It's true, and it's good. . . .

BOOBNOFF.

What was, was ; what's left's all nothing . . .  
There's no difference here. . We're all of us  
level ; nothing but the bare, naked man. . .

LUKA

That means all are equal . But tell me,  
dearie, have you been a Baron ?

THE BARON

What is it ? Is it a spectre ?

LUKA

(*Laughs* ) Counts I've seen, and I've seen  
princes but a baron—the first that I ever  
saw, and this only a damaged one

PEPEL

(*Laughing* ) That's up against you, Baron

THE BARON

We live and learn, Vassili

LUKA

Hey—hey. When I look around, my  
lads Your way of life .

BOOBNOFF

Our way of life is uproar commencin' from  
daybreak. . . .

THE BARON

We've some of us lived better. . . . Yes ! I,  
in my time, have lain in bed of a morning and  
drunk my coffee . . . coffee !—with cream. . . .  
Ay !

LUKA

But all of us—are all men ! You can pretend  
all you like, and give yourself all the airs, but  
a man were you born, and a man you have to  
die . . . And I see, for all folks gets wiser and  
busier . . . and though they live worse and  
worse . . . they've the will to live better  
the stiff-necks !

THE BARON

What are you, old 'un ? Where are you from ?

LUKA

What ? I ?

THE BARON

A tramp ?

LUKA

Tramps we are all . . . And they say now, as  
I'm told, this whole earth is a tramp in the skies

THE BARON

(*Severely*) Maybe it is , but—have you a pass-  
port ?

LUKA.

(*After a slight pause.*) And what are you, then—an informer?

PEPEL.

(*Delighted* ) Had 'im, old 'un ! How do you feel now, Baron?

BOOBNOFF.

Um—yes, that was one for the gentleman

THE BARON

(*Taken aback* ) What d'yer mean?  
Why, I was only joking, old man ! I haven't got any papers myself

BOOBNOFF

Now you're lying

THE BARON

Oh, well I've got some papers . . .  
but none that are good for anything

LUKA

But those papers are all the same they're  
none of them good for anything

PEPEL

Baron, let's go to the trakter

THE BARON

Right ! Well, goodbye, old man . . . you're  
a rascal !

LUKA.

Tell me who isn't, friend . .

PEPEL.

(*By passage door* ) Well, come along !

(*Goes out, the BARON rapidly following.*)

LUKA

Is it true that that man was a Baron?

BOOBNOFF

Who can say? A gentleman 'e 'as been .  
It comes out every now and then You can see  
he hasn't got rid of it yet

LUKA

Ay, to be sure, this gentility it's like the small-  
pox a man may get over it, but it leaves  
its marks .

BOOBNOFF

He's right enough though every now and  
then breaks out a bit like he did about  
your passport

(*ALYOSHKA enters, drunk, with a concertina, whistling* )

ALYOSHKA,

Hey, boys !

BOOBNOFF.

What are you bawling for?

ALYOSHKA

I beg pardon . . . ask your forgiveness ! I'm  
a well-bred man . . .

BOOBNOFF

On another jag ?

ALYOSHKA

Many as you like ! This moment the Inspector Myedvyedeff 'e's just thrown me out of the station , 'e said " See," says he, " that you keep out of the streets " . . . that's all . . . I am a man of character . . . My master 'e sneers at me. What is 'e 'imself—my master ? Fi-1 ! 'E's an idiot—a drunkard, my master is ! . . . But I'm just such a man that wants nothing ! I wish for nothing and—that's flat ! You say—here's twenty roubles ! But I—I don't want nothing . . . A straight chap like me to 'ave my mate set over me, and a drunkard . . . Won't stand it, won't 'ave it !

(NASTYA comes out of the kitchen )

'Ere's a million—d-d-don't want it

(NASTYA stands in the door shaking her  
head at ALYOSHKA )

LUKA.

(Good-naturedly ) Ay, lad, you've got a bit  
mixed up. . . .

BOOBNOFF

What fools men are ! . . .

ALYOSHKA.

(*Lying on the floor* ) Well, eat me. For I—  
I want nothing I am a wretched man. Show  
me how I'm worse—why am I worse than others?  
Show me? Myedvyedyeff says, "Keep off the  
streets or I'll bash in your mug" And I—I  
go and lie down right in the middle of the street  
—crush me Nothing—I want nothing!

NASTYA

Poor fellow                  such a kid                  and now  
already                  come to this

ALYOSHKA

(*On his knees before her* ) Lady  
me'mselle ! Parle français price-current ! Been  
on the spree

NASTYA

(*In a loud whisper* ) Vassilisa !

(*VASSILISA opening the door sharply* )

VASSILISA

(*To ALYOSHKA* ) You here again?

ALYOSHKA

Good-day                  don't be 'arsh . . .

VASSILISA

Puppy, I told you to keep your carcase out of  
here . . . and now you've come back !

ALYOSHKA.

Vassilisa Karpovna . . would you like me to  
play you a funeral march?

VASSILISA.

*(Seizing him by the shoulder )* Clear out !

ALYOSHKA.

Stop ! That's not the way ! Funeral march  
just learnt it ! Real music Stop !  
that's not the way !

VASSILISA

I'll teach you . what's the way I'll  
'ave the 'ole street on you you dirty tattler  
you cub, to dare go tattling about me

ALYOSHKA

Well, I'm going

VASSILISA

*(To BOOBNOFF )* Never you let him set foot  
in 'ere D'you hear me?

BOOBNOFF

I aint' your watchman here

VASSILISA.

It's nothing to me what you are ! You're here  
out of charity—don't forget it How much do  
you owe me?

BOOBNOFF

(*Calmly*) Never reckoned. . . .

VASSILISA

I'll reckon for you!

ALYOSHKA

(*Opens door and shouts out*) Vassilisa  
Karpovna! I'm not afraid of you—n-n-not  
afraid!

(*Disappears.*)

(LUKA *laughs*)

VASSILISA

Well, what are you?

LUKA

A wayfarer . . . a bird of passage. .

VASSILISA

For the night or to stop?

LUKA

I'll look round

VASSILISA

Passport!

LUKA

Well, yes

VASSILISA

Come on!

LUKA.

I'll fetch it . it'll arrive with the rest of my luggage

VASSILISA

A bird of passage eh? A jail-bird 'ud be nearer the truth

LUKA.

(*With a sigh*) Um, you're not gentle, mother

(VASSILISA goes to the door of PEPEL'S room, ALYOSHA looks out from the kitchen )

ALYOSHA

(*Whispering*) Has she gone, eh?

VASSILISA

(*Turning on him*) You still here?

(ALYOSHA gives a whistle and disappears )

(NASTYA and LUKA laugh )

BOOBNOFF

(*To VASSILISA*) 'E ain't there

VASSILISA

Who?

BOOBNOFF.

Vaska.

VASSILISA

Did I ask if he was?

BOOBNOFF

I saw you was looking all about . . .

VASSILISA.

I was looking if things was straight, d'yer see? Why's the room not swept out yet? 'Ow often have I told you it's to be kept clean?

BOOBNOFF

It's the actor's turn

VASSILISA

Don't care whose turn Suppose the inspectors come along and put a fine on me then it's out you get, all of you!

BOOBNOFF

(*Calmly.*) Then what will you live by?

VASSILISA

I'll have none of this litter (*Goes into the kitchen To NASTYA*) What's up with you? What's your face all swelled up for? Clean the floor! Natasha—have you seen her? 'As she been here?

NASTYA

Don't know 'aven't seen her

VASSILISA

And he has he<sup>1</sup> been home?

BOOBNOFF.

Vassilsi? Yes . . . Natasha, she was here talking to Klesshtsh, she was. . .

VASSILISA

Did I ask you who she was talking to? Dirt everywhere . . . filth! Ah, yes—pigs! Clean it all up . . . d'you hear!

*(Goes out rapidly)*

BOOBNOFF

That's a wild beast of a woman!

LUKA

She's a serious lady

NASTYA

It's the life that's made her a beast .  
Any one as was tied to a husband like  
hers . . .

BOOBNOFF

- Come, she don't let the tyin' worry her

LUKA.

Does she always rage around like that?

BOOBNOFF.

Always. Then, you see, she came after  
'er lover, and 'e wasn't 'ere

LUKA.

And that put her out, of course. Oh-ho-ho !  
How all sorts of people on this earth is putting  
things in order ! And with all sorts of punish-  
ments, all punishing one another . . . and yet  
there's no order in life . . . and there's no  
cleanness.

BOOBNOFF

Everybody likes things in order but some  
'asn't brains enough. Still, for this cleaning-up—  
Nastya you see to it .

NASTYA.

I see myself ! D'yer think I'm yer servant ?  
(*After a silence*) I shall get drunk to-day !

BOOBNOFF

That's—flat !

LUKA.

Why, what d'you want to drink for, girlie ?  
A moment back you were crying , now you say  
“ I'll get drunk ! ”

NASTYA

(*Loud*) I'll drink, and then I'll cry again  
. . . and that's all !

BOOBNOFF

It's not much

LUKA.

But what for?—tell me that. Every pimple has a reason for it. . .

(NASTYA remains silent, shaking her head )

So           ah-ha! the race of men! What's to be made of it? . . Well, then, say that I was to sweep up   Where do you keep the broom?

BOOBNOFF

Behind the door in the passage

(LUKA goes into the passage )

Nastya !

NASTYA

Well?

BOOBNOFF

Why did Vassilisa go for Alyoshka?

NASTYA.

'E said that Vaska was sick of 'er, and wanted to chuck 'er           and take on with Natasha  
I shall leave here           and go somewhere else. . .

BOOBNOFF

Why? Where?

NASTYA.

I'm sick of it           I'm not wanted here. .

BOOBNOOF.

You're not wanted anywhere . . . and none of all the people on earth—there's none of 'em wanted . . .

*(NASTYA shakes her head. Gets up, and goes slowly out into the passage )*

*(MYEDVYEDYEFF comes in, LUKA after him with a broom )*

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Seems to me I don't know you

LUKA

And all the other people, do you know them all?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

I have to know every one in my ward . . . but here's you—I don't know—

LUKA

Now the cause of that, daddy, is that the whole world doesn't lie in your ward . . . there's just a leetle piece outside of it

*(Goes into kitchen )*

MYEDVYEDYEFF

*(Over to BOOBNOFF )* It's true my ward's not a big one . . . but it's worse than the big ones . . . just now, as I was comin' off duty I 'ad to run in Alyoshka, the bootmaker . . . 'E was

right in the middle of the road, with his concertina, and bellowin' " I want nothing—I want nothing ! " Horses goin' and all the traffic—might get run over and so on . 'E's a wild lad . . so I just took him by the collar Very fond of giving trouble

BOOBNOFF

'Er yer comin' to play draughts to-night?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Coming? M-yes                      What about Vaska?

BOOBNOFF

Nothing . . same as usual

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Means .        he's getting along?

BOOBNOFF

Why shouldn't he get along? He's able to get along

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Doubtfully*) Able to?

(*LUKA goes into the passage with a bucket in his hand*)

M-yes .        there's a sort of talk .        about Vaska . .        ain't yer heard?

BOOBNOFF

I've 'eard all sorts of talk . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

But about Vaska? Am't yer noticed?

BOOBNOFF

What?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Why in general Maybe yer know  
and you're lying? Why everybody knows . .  
(*Sternly*) Let's 'ave no lies, brother!

BOOBNOFF

What should I lie for?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

So so . . ah, come! They say that  
Vaska and Vassilisa what's it to me? I am  
not her father, I'm her uncle It can't make  
me look silly

(KVASHNYA *comes in*)

But there's a kind of people sprung up who wants  
to make every one look silly Ah, so there  
you are . .

KVASHNYA

Boobnoff! Hey, my gallant sentinel! Again  
in the market he asked me to marry him. . . .

BOOBNOFF.

Well, and what then? 'E's got money, and 'e's a sturdy fellow yet. . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

What, I? Ho-ho !

KVASHNYA

You old grizzle pate ! Let be, it's my sore point I've tried it once, duckie—for a woman to marry it's like throwin' yerself down a 'ole in the ice—when you've done it once, yer never forget it . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Now wait a bit                    there are husbands of all sorts

KVASHNYA

I'm always one and the same When my beloved old man breathed his last, may I never 'ave a roof over my 'ead, if I didn't just sit up for joy a whole day and night sat and simply couldn't believe in my happiness .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

If your 'usband beat yer                    why, you should have complained to the police

KVASHNYA

I complained to God for seven years . it 'elped none !

MYEDVYEDYEFF.

Nowadays it's forbidden to beat your wife . . .  
all in these days is strict, according to law . . .  
and order ! No one is to be beaten wrongfully,  
all the beating's to be done to keep order

(LUKA *leads in* ANNA )

LUKA

Slow but sure                      so here we are    Fancy  
leaving her to go alone when she's so weak?  
Which is your place?

ANNA

(*Pointing* ) Thanks, dear old man

KVASHNYA

She's got a 'usband                      look !

LUKA

The poor soul's in quite a weak state  
She creeps along the passage, feeling for the  
walls, and groaning    Why do yer leave 'er by  
'erself?

KVASHNYA

'Adn't noticed, daddy—pardon us ! 'Er maid,  
you see, 'as just gone out for a stroll

LUKA

So now                      you're making fun    .    but 'ow  
can one neglect a 'uman creature so?    Whoever  
it is, all of us is of value.                      .

MYEDVYEDYEFF.

Supervision there must be ! Suddenly—say she dies? Then there's no end of bother. .  
Watch must be kept !

LUKA.

True, Mr. Sergeant . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

M-yes            though I'm            I'm not quite a  
sergeant yet

LUKA

Not? The bearing's so very heroic !

*(Noise and scuffling in the passage    Loud  
cries )*

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Oh, not—not a row?

BOOBNOFF

Sounds like it.

KVASHNYA

Go and look

MYEDVYEDYEFF

There, I've got to go            Ah, the service !  
And why part people when they fight? They'll

stop of themselves . . . yer bound to stop fighting . . . if they was left to fight it out in peace . . . why, they'd fight less, because they'd not forget it so easy.

BOOBNOFF.

(*Getting off his planks* ) Must speak to your superiors about it

(KOSTOLOFF *cries out, throwing open the door* )

KOSTOLOFF

Abraham ! Come . Vassilisa, ' Natasha  
she's killing her come !

(KVASHNYA, MYEDVYEDYEFF, BOOBNOFF  
*rush into the passage* LUKA *looks after them, shaking his head* )

ANNA

O Lord ! poor little Natasha !

LUKA

Who is it fighting ?

ANNA

The mistress with her sister.

LUKA

(*Coming to ANNA* ) What's to be done ?

ANNA

Well, they've both food enough . . and  
health . . .

LUKA

And you—what is your name?

ANNA

Anna	It seems to me	you look
like my father	my dear father	gentle
like him .	and mild	.

LUKA.

It's the knocks I've 'ad , they've made me  
gentle                    (*Laughs with a grating laugh* )

END OF THE FIRST ACT



## THE SECOND ACT



## THE SECOND ACT

SCENE —*Same scene*    *Night*

*(On the planks round about the stove SATINE, BARON, WHEN, and the TARTAR are playing at cards KLESSHTSH and the ACTOR are watching the game BOOBNOFF, on his planks, is playing draughts with MYEDVYEDYFFF LUKA is seated on a stool by ANNA'S bed The shelter is lighted by two lamps one on the wall by the card-players, the other on BOOBNOFF'S planks*

THE TARTAR

One more game—then I stop

BOOBNOFF

When ! Sing ! *(He sings )*

*The sun it rises and it sets*

WHEN

*(Harmonising )*

*In my prison darkness reigns*

THE TARTAR

*(To SATINE )* Shuffle ! Shuffle well ! We know you, yer know

## WHEN *and* BOOBNOFF

(Together )

*Day and night the warders go,  
Pacing underneath my window.*

ANNA

Yells abuse nothing else have I  
seen nothing besides

LUKA

There, missus, don't fret!

MYEDVVEDVEFF

Look out, where are yer moving?

## BOOBNOFF

Ah ! yes, yes, yes

## THE TARTAR

(*Threatening SATINE with his fist*) Why er  
yer trying to hide a card? I see yer yer  
beauty!

## WHEN

Chuck it, Hassan! They're sure to skin us.  
Boobnoff, strike up!

ANNA.

I can't remember when I wasn't hungry  
I've trembled all my life . . . Dreaded . . . I  
shouldn't get no more to eat . . . been in rags  
all my life . . . all my wretched life . . .  
why, why?

LUKA.

There, there, darling ! You're tired      Never  
mind

THE ACTOR.

(To WHEN )      Play the Knave—the Knave,  
damn yer !

THE BARON

We 'ave the King

KLESSHTSH

They win every time

SATINE

It's a way er 'ave . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Crown him !

BOOBNOFF

And I              um-m .

ANNA

I'm dying

KLESSHTSH

Just look at 'em !      Prince, you chuck it !  
Chuck it, I tell yer !

THE ACTOR

You let him alone

Look out, Andruiska, that I don't give you a damned hiding!

One game more The pitcher goes to the well so often it gets broken at last.

(KLESSHTSH, with a shake of his head,  
moves over to BOOBNOFF )

I'm always thinking Oh! Lord, can it be that in the other world, too, I shall have to suffer? Not there as well?

There won't be nothing ! Lie and listen !  
Nothing ! You'll have rest there                      A little  
more patience                      All, dearie, they all suffer  
each in his own way                      (*Gets up with  
quick steps* )

(Goes into the kitchen )

*(Sings.)*

*Take your gun, and have some fun .*

I'm not going to run away

*(Together.)*

*Longing, longing to be free,  
But my chains I cannot break . .*

THE TARTAR

(*Shouts out* ) That card was in your sleeve

THE BARON

(*Confused* ) Do you want me to ram it under your nose?

THE ACTOR

(*Positively* ) Prince, you're wrong never, never in this world

THE TARTAR

Saw it ! Sharper ! I'll play no more !

SATINE

(*Gathering up the cards* ) Hassan, go and shake yourself yer know we were sharpers Then why did yer play with us ?

THE BARON

I've won forty kopecks, and you shriek as if you were beggared come, one more !

THE TARTAR

(*Hotly* ) Then play straight

SATINE

What for ?

THE TARTAR

How "What for?"

SATINE

Just so what for ?

THE TARTAR

Well, don't yer know?

SATINE

I don't know Der you?

*(The TARTAR spits viciously All laugh at him )*

WHEN

*(Good-naturedly )* You're green, Hassan !  
Can't you see ! If they was to begin living  
honestly, why, in three days they'd starve

THE TARTAR

That's nothing to me ! They must live  
honestly !

WHEN

Keep it now ! Better go and 'ave some tea  
Boobnoff ! And

*Oh, my chains, my heavy chains*

BOOBNOFF.

*Oh, my heavy clanking chains*

WHEN

Come along, Hassanka ! *(Goes out singing )*  
*Tease me not, and I'll not beat yer*

*(TARTAR threatens the BARON with his fist,  
and goes out after his companion.)*

SATINE.

(*Smiling to BARON*) You, your mightiness,  
you came another cropper! You've had an edu-  
cation, but yer can't palm a card

THE BARON

(*Hands apart*) Devil knows how it hap-  
pened

THE ACTOR

No talent            no belief in yourself  
without that no good ever

MYEDVYEDYEFF

I've one King            and you've two  
m-yes!

BOOBNOFF

One's good enough, if he's a brainy one  
on yer go!

KLESSHTSH

Er yer winning, Abra'm Ivanitich?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

None of your business            d'yer see? So  
shut yer mouth

SATINE

Fifty-three kopyeks in

THE ACTOR

Three kopyeks for me            though what do  
I want with three kopyeks?

LUKA.

(*Coming out of kitchen* ) Well, so you've cleared out the Tartar? Going to have a glass now?

THE BARON

Come along with us

SATINE

Let's see what yer like drunk

LUKA

No better than I am sober

THE ACTOR

Come along, old man                      I'll recite to  
yer

LUKA

What ever's that?

THE ACTOR

Verses—understand?

LUKA

Verses ! What do I want with verses?

THE ACTOR

They're amusing                      sometimes they're  
sad .

SATINE

Hi, recitationist, er yer coming?

(*Goes out with BARON* )

THE ACTOR.

Coming . I'll catch yer up ! Now, for instance, here's a bit out of one poem, old man

The beginning I've forgotten clean forgotten ! . . . (*Strikes his forehead* )

BOOBNOFF

There ! I've taken yer king on you go !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

If I'd gone there, you'd 'ave 'ad 'im

THE ACTOR

In the past, before I was poisoned with alcohol, I had a fine study, old man But now you see It's all up, brother ! All up with me I used to give that poem with enormous success thunder of applause You—you don't know how it feels—applause why, brother, it's like vodka ! I'd come on stand like this stand like this and (*Silence* ) Can't remember a thing not a word can't remember ! Used to love that piece in a bad way, eh, old 'un ?

LUKA

There can't be no good in fergettin' what yer loved Where yer love there's all yer soul

THE ACTOR

I've drunk my soul, old man I'm lost, brother Lost how ? Hadn't no belief . . . I'm done with

LUKA.

No! Why? You . . . you can be cured!  
In these days they cure people of drunkenness—  
fact! Cure them, brother, fer nothin'. . .  
There's a 'ospital been built for drunkards . .  
and they cure 'em fer nothin'. . . It's recog-  
nised, yer see, that a drunkard's a man, too,  
and when 'e wants to be cured, they rejoice at  
'im! So stir up and be off

THE ACTOR

(*Reflectively*) Where? Where is it?

LUKA

Well, it's . . . it's in a certain town  
what d'yer call it! It's just a name like!  
Now you just do this . . . be gettin' ready  
Control yourself! . . . Take yerself in hand, and  
—wait . . . And then—get cured . . . and  
begin life all over again . . . sounds good,  
brother, all over again? Make your mind up,  
and it's done

THE ACTOR

(*Smiling*) Over again . . . from the begin-  
ning . . . that's fine . . . m-yes  
All over again? (*Laughs*) Um . . . Yes!  
Can't? I really can, eh?

LUKA

Can yer? Anything a man can do . . . if 'e  
makes up his mind to do it . . .

THE ACTOR

*(Suddenly, as if awakened)* You're a crank  
By-bye for the present! *(Whistles)* Old boy  
—goodbye to yer.

*(Goes out)*

ANNA

Gran'pa, darling!

LUKA

What, dearie?

ANNA

Talk to me

LUKA.

*(Close to her)* Come now, let's talk

*(KLESSHTSH looks round, silently comes  
towards his wife, looks at her, makes  
some movements with his hands, as  
though wishing to speak)*

What's up, comrade?

KLESSHTSH

*(In a low voice)* Nothing

*(Goes slowly to passage door, stands in it  
for a few seconds—and goes out)*

LUKA

*(Following him with his eyes)* Takes it to  
heart, does your old man

ANNA

He's nothing now to me.

LUKA

Did 'e beat yer?

ANNA

Worse than that                      I'm dyin' through  
'im

BOOBNOFF

My wife                      she 'ad a lover—played draughts  
finely—a thorough scoundrel

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Um-m

ANNA

Dear gran'pa! Talk to me, dearie                      I  
can't breathe

LUKA

That's nothing! Comes before death, lovie  
Just hope                      You're goin' to die, and  
then you'll be at peace, there'll be nothing more  
that yer need fear—nothing! Calm, peace  
Don't move! Death—it settles all                      It's very  
tender with us                      You die, you rest, that's to  
say                      that's what it is, pet! Because—for  
can a man find rest here?

(PEPEL comes in He is slightly drunk,  
dishevelled, sullen Sits on planks  
by door, silent without moving)

ANNA.

If there too—there's suffering?

LUKA.

There won't be anything ! Nothing ! Trust me ! Rest—and nothing more ! They'll lead you up to God, and they'll say, " Lord, look here, behold, here is Thy servant, Anna " .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Severely* ) How do you know what they say up there ? I like that

(*At the sound of MYEDVYEDYEFF'S voice, PEPEL lifts up his head and listens* )

LUKA

It's just like this, that I *do* know, Mr Sergeant .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Conciliatory* ) M—yes ! I don't see myself though I'm not yet exactly a sergeant

BOOBNOFF.

I take two

MYEDVYEDYEFF

O Lord            do go ahead

LUKA.

And the Lord, 'E'll look at you mildly and fondly, and He'll say, " I know that same Anna "   
 *a*

Then He'll say, " Take her, that Anna, into Paradise Let 'er be at peace . . . for I know—'er life it was very hard . . . she's very weary. . . . Give rest unto Anna "

ANNA

(*Breathing hard* ) Uncle                      you are such a dear ! If it is so . . . if there's just rest . . . and to feel nothing more. . . .

LUKA

There won't be ! There won't be anything ! Trust me ! Die joyfully, and no worry . . . I tell you, Death it's to us                      like a mother with her little children

ANNA

Yet                      I may                      I may get well ?

LUKA

What for ? For fresh suffering ?

ANNA

But                      to live a little                      just a wee bit more If there's no suffering I could endure a little longer I could

LUKA

There'll be nothing more                      It's simple . . .

PEPEL

(*Rising* ) May be                      and may not be.

ANNA.

(*Frightened.*) Oh, Lord ! . . .

LUKA.

Ah, dearie . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Who's that bellowing ?

PEPEL.

Me ! What of it ?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

You shouldn't bellow, that's what Folk should  
bear themselves quietly

PEPEL

Ah yer block ! You're a fine uncle  
ho--ho !

LUKA

(*To PEPEL in a low tone* ) Please now don't  
shout ! A woman's dying here don't dis-  
turb 'er !

PEPEL.

I respect you, gran'pa ! You're a brick, you  
are ! You're a good liar you put things  
nicely ! Lying's no harm there's so little  
that's cheering in the world !

BOOBNOFF.

What ! Is the woman really dyin' ?

LUKA.

Ay, there's no joke about it . . .

BOOBNOFF.

Shan't have no more coughing then                      Most  
disturbin' 'er cough was                      I take two . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Ah, I'm done for—I'm done for !

PEPEL

Abraham !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Don't call me Abraham

PEPEL

Abramka ! Is Natasha ill ?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

What's that to you ?

PEPEL

I want to know    Was it a bad beating Vassilisa  
gave her ?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

And that's none of your business ! It's a family  
matter.                      Who do yer think yer are ?

PEPEL

Don't matter who I am                      but if I choose,  
you'll never see Natasha again !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Leaving the game*) What d'yer say? Who are yer talkin' of? D'yer think my niece? Ah, yer robber!

PEPEL

A robber you never could catch

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Wait! I'll catch yer                      you see

PEPEL.

Catch me—and I'd flog the whole nest of yer D'yer think I'd keep quiet before the beak? Expect a wolf to howl! They say, "Who taught yer to rob, and showed yer the cribs?" Mikhail Kostoloff and his wife! "Who was yer fence?" Mikhail Kostoloff and his wife!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Lies! They won't believe yer!

PEPEL.

Yes, they will, for it's truth! And I'll give you a twist                      ha! I'll sink the whole lot of yer, yer devils—you see!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Shaking*) Lies! And                      lies! And what 'arm 'ave I done to you? Yer scabby cur!

PEPEL

And what good 'ave yer done to me?

LUKA.

Ri-ight there !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*To* LUKA ) What er you . . . croaking for?  
'Is this any of your business? This is a family  
matter !

BOOBNOFF

(*To* LUKA ) Let be ! Not ours to meddle in

LUKA

(*Peaceably* ) I said nothing ! I only say that  
if one man 'asn't done good to another, 'e 'asn't  
done well

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Not understanding* ) 'Ere we are and  
we all know one another But who are you,  
pray ?

(*Makes an angry grimace and goes out* )

LUKA

The gentleman's angry Oh-ho, brothers,  
things here I see things here in a tangle !

PEPEL

'E's gone to whine to Vassilisa

BOOBNOFF

You're foolish, Vassili Much good yer bold-  
ness has done yer . Boldness is all right in  
its place but 'ere it cuts no figure. . .  
They'll slice yer 'ead off aliye

**PEPEL.**

N-no, they won't ! Us Yaroslaff boys—you don't catch us napping . if it's war we shall fight. . . .

**LUKA.**

But I tell you truly, lad, you get out of this house . get clear of it

**PEPEL**

Where to? You tell me that

**LUKA**

Go to Siberia

**PEPEL**

Ho-ho When I go to Siberia, I mean to go at the charge of the Crown

**LUKA.**

Now listen to me—you go there ! There you can make your own way you're just the kind for there !

**PEPEL**

The way is marked out for me My father passed his whole life in prison, and 'e told me to Why, when I was a little boy they called me thief—and thief's son

**LUKA.**

But it's a grand country—Siberia ! A golden country. 'Oo 'as the might 'as the right.

PEPEL.

Old boy, why are you always lying?

LUKA.

What's that?

PEPEL.

Deaf? Why do yer lie, I ask?

LUKA

In what do yer mean I lie?

PEPEL

In all            you say it's good there, good here  
you're plainly lying! What's it for?

LUKA

You take my word and go there, and see fer  
yerself You'll say thanks            What's the  
good of loafing here? And            why are yer so  
mad after the truth?            Think a bit! The  
same truth might cut like a razor

PEPEL

I don't care! If it's a razor, it's a razor .

LUKA

Oh, you're crazy! Why go and destroy  
yerself?

BOOBNOFF

What is it that you two are jawing about?  
I don't know! What sort of a truth, Vaska,

'd'yer want? And why? Yer know the truth about yerself . . . ay, and every one knows it . . .

PEPEL.

Hold on, stop yer croaking! I want 'im to tell me listen, old man is there a God?

(LUKA gives a silent smile )

Say now, is there?

BOOBNOFF

People just live like shavings on a stream a house is built . and the shavings . off they floats !

LUKA.

(*In a low voice* ) If you believe it— there is , if you don't believe it, there's not . that which yer believe in, that is

(PEPEL looks at the old man fixedly and in surprise )

BOOBNOFF.

Shall we go and have some tea come on to the trakteer? Eh?

LUKA.

(*To PEPEL* ) What are you looking at?

PEPEL.

Just so. . Now wait Then that means . . .

BOOBNOFF

Then I'll go alone

*(Goes to door, encounters VASSILISA )*

PEPEL

Therefore            you

VASSILISA.

*(To BOOBNOFF )* Nastya at home?

BOOBNOFF

No

*(Goes out )*

PEPEL

Ah            you're there

VASSILISA

*(Over to ANNA )* Still alive?

LUKA.

Don't disturb 'er

VASSILISA

What er yer hanging about here for?

LUKA

I'll go            if yer want me to

VASSILISA

*(Towards the door of PEPEL'S room )* Vassili !  
I've somethin' to say ter you

*(LUKA goes to the passage door, opens it,  
and shuts it loudly Then he clambers  
on to the planks, and from there on to  
the stove )*

VASSILISA.

(From PEPEL'S room ) Vaska . come here !

PEPEL

I'm not coming I don't mean to .

VASSILISA

Ah what's wrong? What's annoyin' yer?

PEPEL

I'm bored sick of the whole rigmarole

VASSILISA

And of me?

PEPEL

And of you

(VASSILISA draws her handkerchief tight over her chest, pressing against it her hands Goes towards ANNA, looks carefully behind the curtains, and returns to PEPEL )

Well out with it

VASSILISA

Out with what? Can't force people to be kind  
and it ain't in me to beg for kindness  
. Thank you for the truth

PEPEL

What truth?

VASSILISA.

That I'm a bore to you . . . or isn't it the truth?

(PEPEL looks at her in silence. She turns to him )

What er yer staring at? Don't yer know me?

PEPEL

(*With a sigh* ) You're beautiful, Vassilisa (*she puts her hand on his shoulder, but he shakes it off*)—but my 'eart it was never yours . . . And I lived with you, and the rest of it . . . and I've never really liked yer

VASSILISA

So-o . . . well ?

PEPEL

Well, we've nothing to talk about ! Nothing at all ! Get away from me !

VASSILISA

You fancy some one else?

PEPEL

Not your business . . . If it was so it's not you I'd consult

VASSILISA

That's a pity . . . P'raps I might arrange things.

PEPEL

(*Suspiciously*) What- d'yer say?

VASSILISA.

You know how to conceal things  
Vassil I'm a straight chap (*Lower*)  
I'll hide nothing you've dealt with me  
shabby for no reason you've laid it on with  
a whip said yer loved me, and all of a  
sudden . .

PEPEL

'Twasn't sudden for a long time  
there's no soul in you, woman we are  
beasts We must be we must be  
trained and what 'ave you trained me to?

VASSILISA

What was it over? I know a man can't  
help 'is own will yer love me no more  
all right

PEPEL

That's it, it's at an end We part peaceably,  
without no 'rows the proper way!

VASSILISA

No, wait now! It's this When we came  
together I banked on you to drag me out of all  
this nastiness—to free me from my 'usband, my  
uncle from all this life and p'raps it  
wasn't you, Vaska, that I loved but my hope

. . . it was that thought of you I loved. . . .  
D'you follow? I expected you to pull me  
out. .

PEPEL

You aren't a nail, I—ain't a pincers . . .  
you've wits enough and you're—wily !

VASSILISA

*(Coming close to him )* Vaska ! Come, now  
let's 'elp one another

PEPEL

'Ow ?

VASSILISA

*(Low and forcible )* My sister she's  
taken yer fancy, I know

PEPEL

And that's why you beat her, you savage !  
Vassilisa, look 'ere ! Don't dare to lay a finger  
on 'er

VASSILISA

Stop now ! Don't get hot ! It can all be done  
quietly and well D'yer wish—to marry 'er ? I'll  
give yer money with 'er three hundred solid  
roubles ! If I can afford it, more

PEPEL

*(Coming up to her )* Stop why is it ?  
What's it for ?

VASSILISA.

Rid me . . from my 'usband    Relieve me  
of that millstone .

PEPEL

(*Whistling softly* )    So now we've got to it  
Oh ho-ho !    A very crafty notion . .    get your  
'usband in his grave, your lover doin' time, whilst  
you . .

VASSILISA

Vaska !    Why doin' time ?    You won't yerself  
                  get some of yer pals !    Suppose it was  
yerself, who's to know ?    Natasha            think  
now !    You'll 'ave money            you can go any-  
where            set me free for ever, then, too, the  
sister, she won't be round me, that's good fer  
'er.    The sight of 'er's bad for me            on ac-  
count of you I get spiteful            and I can't hold  
it in            I torment the girl, beat her  
beat her so            that myself I can cry with pity  
for her            yet I beat her    And—I will beat  
her !

PEPEL

You savage !    Do yer brag of yer savageness ?

VASSILISA

I don't brag—I speak truth    Think now, Vaska  
Twice through my 'usband 'ave you gone to jail  
                  . through 'is avarice            'E's glued to me  
like a limpet            four whole years !    And what  
sort of a 'usband d'yer call 'im ?    'E scolds

Natasha, torments her, calls 'er a beggar ! To every one 'e's just—poison . . .

PEPEL

You do yarn cleverly

VASSILISA

All I say's above board                      It's only a fool  
that won't see what I want .

(KOSTOLOFF *enters cautiously and steals forward* )

PEPEL

(*To VASSILISA* ) Oh—get away !

VASSILISA

Think it over ! (*Sees husband* ) What, you ?  
Er yer followin' me ?

(PEPEL *leaps up and eyes KOSTOLOFF savagely* )

KOSTOLOFF

It's me                      me ! You're here—by your-  
selves ! Ah—ah                      You're                      having a talk  
(*Suddenly stamping with his feet and shouting out* ) Vaska .                      you devil ! Beggar ! Hag !  
(*Startled at his own cries, met by silence and immobility* ) I ask pardon                      . Here again,  
Vassilisa, you lead me into sin .                      Been every-  
where hunting fer yer                      (*In a scream* ) It's  
bedtime ! You've forgotten to fill the lamps . . .

you, you . . . beggar . . . sow . . . (*Points at her with trembling hands*)

(*VASSILISA slowly goes to passage door, looking round at PEPEL*)

PEPEL

(*To KOSTOLOFF*) Get out of here clear out . . .

KOSTOLOFF

(*Yells*) I'm the master! Clear out yourself, thief!

PEPEL

(*Sullenly*) Be off, Mikhail!

KOSTOLOFF

You dare to—I'll show you I tell you

(*PEPEL seizes him by the collar and shakes him. A noise is heard from the stove and a loud yawning. PEPEL releases KOSTOLOFF, who runs into the passage*)

PEPEL

(*Springing on to the planks*) Who's there on that stove?

LUKA

(*Raising his head*) Eh?

PEPEL.

You?

LUKA.

Me . . . me myself. . . . Of Lord Jesus Christ.

PEPEL

*(Closes the passage door, feels for the bolt and can't find it)* The devils! Old man, get down!

LUKA

All ri-ight . getting down

PEPEL

*(Menacingly)* Why did yer get on that stove?

LUKA

Where 'ud yer 'ave me get?

PEPEL

Yer made as you'd gone in the passage.

LUKA

In the passage, comrade, it's cold for an old man

PEPEL

You heard?

LUKA

Ay—heard How not to hear? Ud yer 'ave me deaf? Ah, my lad, your happiness is coming to yer it's happiness that's coming to yer.

PEPEL.

(*Suspiciously* ) What 'appiness? In what way?

LUKA

Why, in the way that took me on to the stove

PEPEL

Ah. why did you make that noise?

LUKA

Why, because I was getting aglow for the orphan laddie's welfare yet I knew well that the laddie might take it all wrong, that he might be for throttling the old man

PEPEL

Ye-es it was a near thing .

LUKA

Ay them mistakes often get made

PEPEL

What are you?

LUKA

My lad ! Now listen to me, what I say that woman—cut it ! Nothing to do with 'er !—keep out of 'er way? She'll put 'er 'usband out of the way better ner you could, yes ! Don't you listen to her, the devil Look at me—ah? Bald . and why? Out of all these same different sorts of women I should say I've known,

maybe, more women than ever there grew hairs  
upon my head            And that Vassilisa—she  
. . . she's worse than a pagan Finn !

PEPEL.

I don't know if I ought to thank yer, or  
whether you as well

LUKA

Don't you say nothin' ! You'll say nothing  
better than what I've said ! Listen the one  
you fancy, put 'er arm in yours, and out of here  
in double-quick time    Get out of here, clean  
away

PEPEL

No makin' people out ! Who's good, 'oo's bad  
can't understand a thing

LUKA

What's there to understand ? There's all sorts  
of men            As their hearts tells 'em, so they  
live            good to-day, bad to-morrow    But if  
that girl's really got hold of yer heart            take  
'er clear off, and 'ave done with it            Or else  
go alone            you're young, you've time to look  
out for a wife

PEPEL

(*Takes him by the shoulder* )    No, you tell  
me, why are you on to this ?

LUKA.

Naw come, let me go            . Must see to Anna

. . . she was rattling so bad . . . (*Goes to Anna's bed, opens curtains, looks, feels with his hand* )

(*PEPEL comes after him, thoughtful and distraught* )

Jesus Christ, most merciful Lord, the spirit of Thy newly departed servant Anna receive into Thy peace

PEPEL

(*Softly* ) Dead ? (*Without approaching, leans forward so as to obtain a sight of the bed* )

LUKA

(*Softly* ) She is gone ! Where will 'er 'usband be ?

PEPEL

In the trakteer, most likely

LUKA

Well, 'e must know

PEPEL

(*Shuddering* ) I don't care for dead people.

LUKA.

(*Going to the door* ) What's there to care for ? Care for the living the living

PEPEL

I'll come with yer

LUKA

What, afraid?

PEPEL.

Don't like it

*(They go out quickly )**(Emptiness and silence At the passage  
door a dull, incomprehensible, uneven  
sound is heard Then enter the  
ACTOR )*

THE ACTOR

*(Standing in the open door, supporting himself  
against the door-posts, shouts out)* Old man,  
hi! Where are yer? I've remembered  
listen!*(He staggers two steps forward, strikes an  
attitude, and begins.)**Then, gentlemen, for all our pain  
If truth still flee our straining eyes,  
Shall we not hail the madman's brain  
The brain that spins us golden lies?**(NATASHA appears in the door behind the  
ACTOR )*

Old man!

*And tho' the earth to atoms fly,  
And tho' the sun be quenched and dead,  
They shall be re-created by  
The thought within a madman's head*

NATASHA

(*Laughs.*) You gaby! You're full. . .

THE ACTOR

(*Turns to her*) Ah, it's you! Where's the little old boy . . . the darling little old man? Nowhere 'ere, that's clear . . . Natasha, farewell . . . Farewell . . . yes

NATASHA

Never said good-day, now says goodbye

THE ACTOR

(*Barring the way to her*) I—am going away  
The spring'll come, and you won't see me  
no more.

NATASHA

Rubbish . . . where er yer goin'?

THE ACTOR

To find a town . . . to get cured . . . you  
clear out, too . . . Ophelia . . . into a monastery  
yer see, there's a hospital for organisms  
for drunkards . . . a splendid hospital  
Marble . . . marble floor! Light, clean food—  
all for nothing! And a marble floor . . . yes!  
I'll find it, get cured, and . . . I shall be all  
over again . . . I'm on the way to regeneration  
. . . as said . . . King Lear . . . Natasha, on the  
stage . . . my name was Svertchkoff—Yavolski  
. . . No one knows that—no one! I've no name

here. . . Can't you understand how that's gall-  
ing—to lose yer name? Dogs even have their  
names.

(NATASHA manages to get round the ACTOR,  
goes over to ANNA'S bed and looks )

No name, and you're no man.

NATASHA

Look the poor soul look ! She's  
dead !

THE ACTOR

(Shaking his head ) It can't be

NATASHA

(Moving away ) God ! yes look

BOOBNOFF

(In the door ) Look at what ?

NATASHA

Anna she's dead

BOOBNOFF

Won't cough no more, that means (Goes  
to ANNA'S bed, looks, goes to his place ) You  
must tell Klesshtsh it's 'is business .

THE ACTOR

I'll go and tell him . she has lost her  
name.

(Goes out.)

NATASHA.

And then . . . one I too . same  
for all . . struck down

BOOBNOFF.

(*Stretching a rag of some kind over his planks*) What—what er yer mumbling?

NATASHA

So . to myself

BOOBNOFF

Waiting for Vaska? You see, Vaska'll break yer head for yer .

NATASHA

Does it much matter—'oo breaks it? I'd sooner that he did

BOOBNOFF

(*Lying down*) That's your affair .

NATASHA

For surely it's well she's dead it's  
sad, too Lord! Why do people live?

BOOBNOFF

So with all born, live, die And I shall  
die and you too where's the sad-  
ness?

(*Enter LUKA, the TARTAR, WHEN, and KLESSHTSH KLESSHTSH comes behind the others, slowly, shrunk up*)

NATASHA

Sh ! Anna.

WHEN

We've heard in 'eaven, if she's  
dead

THE TARTAR

(*To KLESSHTSH*) You must have her out !  
Out into the passage ! Can't keep dead bodies in  
here , here the living have to sleep

KLESSHTSH

(*Low*) Well, take 'er out

(*All go over to the bed , KLESSHTSH looks  
at his wife over the others' shoulders*)

WHEN.

(*To the TARTAR*) You think she'll smell?  
There'll be no smell from her she 'ad  
wasted alive .

NATASHA

Good Lord ! won't yer pity 'er? if some-  
one 'ud speak a kind word ! Oh, you

LUKA

Girle, dor't take on it's all right ! For  
what and how shall we pity the dead? Eh,  
darling ! The living we don't pity . and  
ourselves we don't pity why her?

BOOBNOFF.

(*Yawning*) And besides, death don't wince from a word      illness may wince from a word, but death      no !

THE TARTAR

(*Going out.*) Must fetch the police

WHEN

Police—that must be done ! Klesshtsh ! 'ave yer informed the police?

KLESSHTSH

No      she's got to be buried      and all I've got's forty kopyeks

WHEN

Well, in that case yer must borrow      and we'll club together      one gives five, another—what 'e can      But get the police—and quick ! Else they'll be fancying it was yer doin', or what not      (*Goes to the planks and makes ready to lie down beside the* TARTAR )

NATASHA

(*Moving away from* BOOBNOFF'S *planks*)  
Now      you see I shall dream of 'er  
the dead always appear in my dreams      I'm  
afraid to go alone      it's dark in the  
passage

LUKA

(*Following her*) You be afraid of the living  
    . that's what I say

NATASHA

Come with me, daddy.

LUKA

Come            come, I'll see yer safe !

*(They go out    A pause )*

WHEN

Oh—ho-o !    Hassan, spring soon, mate  
we shall feel warmer then    Now in the country  
already peasant's looking to 'is plough and 'is  
'arrows, gettin' ready to till            all ready for  
tilling            m-yes !    And    we            Hassan?  
Snoring already !    Accursed Mahometan !

BOOBNOFF

Tartars love to sleep

KLESSHTSH

*(Standing in the middle of the shelter and  
gazing vacantly in front of him )*    What am I  
goin' to do now?

WHEN

Lie down, and sleep            that's all there is  
to it

KLESSHTSH

*(Low )*    But            she            how?

*(No one answers )*

*(SATINE and the ACTOR come in.)*

THE ACTOR.

(*Shouts out* ) Old 'un ! Hither to me, my true  
Kent

SATINE.

Way for Miklooka—Maklai                      Ho-ho !

THE ACTOR

It's fixed and decided ! Old 'un, where's the  
town                      where are yer ?

SATINE

Fata Morgana, the old man diddled yer !  
There's nothing                      No towns, no people—  
nothing at all !

THE ACTOR

You lie !

THE TARTAR

(*Leaping up* ) Where's the master ? I'll fetch  
the master    If I can't sleep 'e shan't take my  
money    Corpses                      drunkards

(*Goes out quickly* )

(SATINE *whistles after him* )

BOOBNOFF

(*In a sleepy voice* ) Lie down, boys, keep  
quiet                      in the night yer must sleep.

THE ACTOR

Yes . . . here—aha ! A corpse. . . . “ We  
took a corpse up in our nets ” . . . poetry . . .  
Béranger !

SATINE.

(*Calls out*)    Corpses can't hear !    corpses  
can't feel.       Bellow       yell .       corpses  
can't hear       .

(*LUKA appears in the doorway*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT

## **THE THIRD ACT**



## THE THIRD ACT

SCENE — "*The Waste*," strewn with all sorts of rubbish and overgrown with long grass At the back, a high brick party wall It shuts out the sky Around it are elder bushes At right a dark timber wall belonging to some sort of an outhouse, a barn or a stable At left the grey, crumbling plaster wall of the house in which KOSTOLOFF'S night-shelter is It stands on a slant, so that the further corner reaches almost to the middle of the "Waste" Between it and the party wall a narrow passage In the grey wall are two windows one on a level with the ground, the other about six feet higher up and closer to the party wall By that wall is a big sledge turned upside down and a beam about twelve feet long At right, by wall, a heap of old planks Evening The sun is setting, throwing a red light on the party wall Early spring, the snow being lately melted No buds as yet on the black elder branches

(NATASHA and NASTYA are seated on the beam, side by side LUKA and the BARON on the sledge KLESSHTSH is lying on the pile of timber, right In the ground-floor window BOOBNOFF'S mug )

NASTYA.

*(With eyes closed, and nodding her head in tune to the words, relates in a sing-song way)*  
Then at night would he come into the garden and talk with me, as we 'ad agreed . and I had been waiting for him a long while, and I shook with dread and anguish And he shook, too, and—pale as honey, and 'e 'eld in 'is 'and a pistol . . .

NATASHA.

*(Chewing reeds )* Oo ! Then it's true that these students—they're such desperate fellows .

NASTYA

And he says to me in a terrible voice, " My own precious love "

BOOBNOFF

Ho-oh ! Precious ?

THE BARON

Here ! If you don't like it, don't listen, let her lie When, then ?

NASTYA

" My imperishable love," 'e says, " my parents," 'e says, " will not consent for me to marry yer and threaten to curse me for ever because of my love for you Therefore, I must," 'e says, " for that reason take my own life." And his pistol was huge, loaded with

ten bullets . . . "Farewell," 'e says, "my 'eart's beloved comrade ! I 'ave decided past recall . . . to live without you—that I cannot " And I replied, " Oh, never can I forget you, my Raoul ! "

BOOBNOFF

(*In astonishment* ) What—what's that ?—  
Kravol ?

THE BARON

(*Laughs* ) Come, Nastya, steady on ! Why, last time it was Gaston !

NASTYA

(*Leaping on* ) Silence, you wretches ! mongrels ! D'yer think you d'yer think you can understand love ? Real love ? For mine—it was real ! (*To BARON* ) You ! Dirt ! an educated man, you lay and drank coffee, did yer ?

LUKA

Come now, come wait a bit ! And don't you interfere ! Show respect to folk not in word—but in deed It's the reason for a word that matters That's where the matter lies ! Tell along, dearie girl, it's all right !

BOOBNOFF

"For all the crow may dye its wings " .  
Dash along !

THE BARON.

Well, what then?

NATASHA

Don't mind them . . . what are they?  
They're only jealous . . . 'cause there's nothing  
to tell about themselves

NASTYA

(*Re-seats herself* ) No, I won't any more ! I  
won't go on . . . If they won't believe  
if they're going to laugh (*Breaks off suddenly,  
is silent for a few minutes, then, with closed  
eyes, and keeping time with her hands, as though  
beating to some far-off music, she goes on again  
loudly and heatedly* ) And then I answer to 'im,  
"Joy of my life ! thou, my limpid moon ! And  
I, too—it is not possible for me to live without  
yer . . . because I love you so wildly, as I shall  
love you as long as a heart beats in this bosom !  
But—I say—take not away your young life . . . It  
is so necessary to your dear parents, for you  
are all their joy . . . give me up ! let me cast  
away my life . . . out of my love for thee . . .  
I am—alone . . . I am—what I am ! I am fit  
for nothing . . . and I 'ave nothing . . .  
nothing—nothing at all " . . . (*Hides her face  
in her hands, and weeps noiselessly* )

NATASHA

(*Turning to one side, in a low tone* ) Don't  
cry . . . yer mustn't cry !

(LUKA, with a smile, strokes NATASHA'S  
head )

BOOBNOFF.

(*Laughs*) Ah! . . . what damned foolery!

THE BARON.

(*Also laughing*) Old 'un! D'yer think all that's true? All out of a book—"The Fatal Love"  
. . . It's all a lot of trash! Let 'er alone!

NATASHA

Leave off! Just shut yer mouth! God'll punish yer yet

NASTYA

(*Bitterly*) Degraded creature! Empty fellow! How could you have—a soul?

LUKA

(*Taking NASTYA'S hand*) Come away, dearie! It's nothing don't get angry! I—know I—believe! It's you that's right, not them If you believe you had a real love why, then, you had one—'ad one! But don't get angry with 'im, with yer room-mate maybe he's envious, and that's what he's laughing for maybe 'e never 'ad one of that real sort 'ad nothing! Come along, then!

NASTYA

(*Pressing her hands fast against her bosom*) Gran'pa! God's truth . . . that's 'ow it was . . . it was, indeed it was! 'E was a student a Frenchman—we called 'im Gastosha . . .

or little black beard . . . and wore patent boots  
 . . . strike me dead if I'm lying ! And 'e loved  
 me so . . . 'e loved me so !

LUKA.

I—know ! It's all right ! I believe ! Did 'e  
 wear patent boots ? Ai—ai—ai—and *you* loved  
 'im too, didn't yer ?

*(Disappears round the corner )*

THE BARON

There's a fool of a girl for yer ! Good !  
 but such a fool—it's incredible !

BOOBNOFF

Why is it ? people's so fond of lying—  
 just as if they was up before the beak it's  
 so !

NATASHA

Can't yer see that lies is jollier  
 than the truth I too——

THE BARON

You too ? Come, let's have it !

NATASHA

I think, and think and I think and  
 —expect

THE BARON

What ?

NATASHA.

(*Smiling in a perturbed way*) Just . .  
Now, I think, to-morrow . there'll come  
somebody . . . something extraordinary  
. . or something will 'appen something  
unusual . I've been expectin' long . I'm  
always expectin' But really . as a  
matter of fact—what is there to expect?

(*Pause*)

THE BARON

(*With a faint smile*) Nothing to expect  
I—expect nothing! All that was has been!  
Passed, ended! What then?

NATASHA

And then I get a fancy that to-morrow  
suddenly I shall die and that  
gets me scared In the summer it makes  
one imagine about death in summer the  
storms are about you may be struck by  
lightning

THE BARON

Your life, it's a hard one that sister of  
yours has a fiend's temper

NATASHA

Tell me—'oo does live 'apply? It's 'ard for  
all that I see

KLESSHTSH

(*Till then motionless and indifferent, suddenly*

*jumping up.*) For all? That's a lie! Not for all! If for all . then all right! Then—there's no 'arm . yes!

BOOBNOFF

What's up—is the devil biting yer? You, indeed, howlin' that way!

(KLESSHTSH *lies down again in his place, muttering* )

THE BARON

Um! I must go and make it up with Natasha if I don't I'll not have the money for a drink

BOOBNOFF

Um! People's fond of lying With Nastya it's clear enough! She's used to colourin' 'er mug and 'ere she is now wantin' to colour her soul to put rooge on her soul But the others why do they? Now, for instance, there's Luka . 'e lies rarely 'e gets nothin' from it And an old man, too—why is it all?

THE BARON

(*Smiling and going off* ) All men they have all grey souls and they all want to rouge 'em up. . .

(LUKA *appears from round the corner* )

LUKA.

Now, dear sir, why do you tease the girl? Don't interfere with 'er . . . let 'er cry—it gives her pleasure. . . . It's for 'er own pleasure, yer see, that she 'as 'er weeps . . . where is the 'arm to you?

THE BARON

It's rubbish, old man! She's a nuisance To-day Raoul, to-morrow—Gaston still the same old tale! Still—I shall go and make it up with 'er

(*Goes out* )

LUKA

Go along, that's it go and fondle 'er! Fondle people never does no 'arm

NATASHA

Daddy, 'ow good yer are! Why are yer so good?

LUKA

Good, der yer say? Um that's right, if so be yes! (*Behind the party wall the sound of low singing to a concertina is heard* ) One must, dearie, be good to some one and we must pity people! Christ—He pitied all, and so He ordered us I say this—if you pity a man then good comes of it! Here, now, I was once a caretaker in a villa . . . an engineer's it was, near the town of Tomsk Ay, it was! The villa stood in a forest, in the 'eart of it and it was winter and—there I

was in the 'ouse all alone . . . Well and good !  
One day—a sound—people rustling !

NATASHA

Thieves ?

LUKA.

Yes That's what's rustlin', ay ! Pick up  
my little gun, and out I went See 'em—two  
openin' the window—so busy about it that  
—they don't see me I shouts out, " You rascals  
be off ! " And then, yer see, they're at me  
with an 'atchet I tell 'em to stand off !  
Or else—I fire ! And my gun I keeps  
pointin' it at one and then the other Down they  
goes on their knees, as to say, " Have mercy ! "  
For I tell you I was riled 'cause of the 'atchet,  
you see ! I says " Now, you woodmen, I've  
ordered yer off oncc, and you're not gone Now  
just you break me off a birch " They broke it off  
Now, I says " Lie down " to the one, and to the  
other, " Flog 'im " So they flogged one another  
And then they began to beseech me " Dearie  
man," they says, " for Christ's sake give us some  
bread ! We'll go away , we meant no 'arm " Them  
was my robbers, lovie (*Laughs* ) Them was  
their 'atchet, too ! Yes good peasants both  
of 'em I says to them " Why, my wood-  
men, you should 'ave asked right out for bread "  
And they say " We're tired of asking," they say  
—" ask and ask and no one gives it's  
cruel ! " So all that winter they lived with me  
The one that was called Stepan—he'd take my gun

and go shootin' in the forest . But the other man, Jacob—'e was ill, coughing always . . And there the three of us together—we took care of the villa. When the spring came—" Goodbye," they say, " gran'pa ! " And off they went they were going to Russia

NATASHA

Were they runaways?—convicts ?

LUKA.

That's just what they were—runaways broken out of prison Proper moujiks ! If I'd not pitied them—maybe that they'd 'ave killed me or what not Besides—courts, and prison and Siberia where's the sense ? Prison don't teach nothin' good, and Siberia don't but it's the man—'e teaches yes ! A man, 'e can teach for good very simply !

(Pause )

BOOBNOFF

M-m-yes ! But here am I I can't lie ! Why ? To my lights—give us just all the truth, as it is ! Why 'ide anythin' ?

KLESSHTSH

(Suddenly leaping up again and shouting out in an ecstatic way ) What's truth ? Where is the truth ? (Tearing at his rags ) Here's—truth ! No work no strength ! Here's truth ! No shelter no shelter ! We must pant and die that is the truth ! The devil !

What—what do I want with the truth? Give me room to breathe . . . room to breathe! Why am I guilty? What's to me . . . the truth? Can't live—blast it!—I can't live! Live—hell!—let us live . . . and there is the truth! . . .

BOOBNOFF

Touched 'im up a bit! . . .

LUKA

Lord Jesus . . . now listen, love! You . . .

KLESSHTSH

(*Quivering with excitement*) You talk about—truth You, old man, you go about and you soothe every one I tell yer I loathe every one! And that's a truth . . . blast the truth! Now do you hear? Now do you know? I say to you—blast it!

(*Rushes off round the corner, turning as he goes*)

LUKA

Ai—ai—ai! It's a real shock 'e's 'ad . . . Where's 'e run off to?

NATASHA

'Is raving don't matter

BOOBNOFF

'E let it go fine! The way they do in the theatres. . . Often 'appens that way . . . not got used to the life

(*PEPEL comes slowly round the corner.*)

PEPEL.

Peace be to this honest assemblage ! Well, Luka, my wily old boy, been givin' them the story of yer life ?

LUKA

You ought to 'ave 'eard just now 'ow one fell a-shouting !

PEPEL

What, Klesshtsh, was it ? What's up with 'im ? 'E's runnin' as if he was scalded

LUKA

When yer run like that, it means it's gone right to yer 'cart

PEPEL

(*Sitting down* ) Don't like 'im 'e's beastly spiteful and 'aughty (*Imitates KLESSHTSH* )  
I am a working man Every one's beneath 'im  
Work, if yer want to nothin' to be cocky about ? If yer value people by their work  
a 'orse can give any man points 'e pulls and—says nothin' ! Natasha ! Your people—in ?

NATASHA

They're gone in the Sqtare—then to evenin' service .

PEPEL.

So, yes, I see that you're free for once . . . a novelty !

LUKA

(*Reflectively to BOOBNOFF* ) Now see . . .  
 you say—truth                    it's not always a good treat-  
 ment for man                    can't always heal the soul  
 with the truth                    For instance, now 'ere's a  
 case I knew a man 'oo believed in a land of  
 righteousness

BOOBNOFF

In wha-at ?

LUKA

In a land of righteousness "There must," 'e said, "on the earth be a land of righteousness and there must be dwelling in that land—an exceptional kind of people                    good people ! they respect one another, and it's just natural to them to help one another                    and all about them is wonderfully good ! " And there was that man 'oo was always wantin' to go and seek the land of righteousness 'E was—poor, lived miserably                    and when it got so bad with 'im that even lyn' down didn't 'elp 'im—still 'e didn't lose 'eart, he'd only just smile and 'e'd say "Never mind ! I can bear it ! A little more waiting—and I've done with all this life—and I shall go off to the land of righteousness " . . . It was his one delight, was that land . . .

PEPEL.

Well? Did 'e go?

BOOBNOFF

Where? Ho, ho !

LUKA.

And then to this place—all this was in Siberia—there came an exile, 'e was a scholar books and plans 'e 'ad, that scholar 'ad, and every sort of thing Then the man says to the scholar "Show me, if you will be so kind, where does the land of righteousness lie, and which is the way there?" At once the scholar opens 'is books, undoes 'is plans 'e looked—looked—no, there's nowhere no land of righteousness It's quite true, the countries there are all marked, but for a righteousness one—there isn't such !

PEPEL

What? None?

(BOOBNOFF *laughs* )

NATASHA

Stop now

Well, uncle?

LUKA

The man won't believe "There must be," 'e says "look well ! If not," 'e says, "yer books and yer plans they're no use if there isn't any land of righteousness " The scholar was offended "My plans," 'e says, "are the very latest, and there isn't nowhere not any land of

righteousness at all." Well, and then the man grew angry "Can't be! I've lived and lived and suffered and suffered and always believed—there is! and your plan says that there's not! Robbery!" Then 'e says to the scholar "Ah, you you scum! You're a swindler, not a scholar" and gives 'im one—whack—on 'is ear! Then another!

*(Silence )*

And after that 'e went 'ome and 'anged 'imself!

*(All are silent, LUKA, with a smile, looks at PEPEL and NATASHA )*

PEPEL

*(In low tones )* Oh, the devil! that's not a cheerful tale

NATASHA

'E couldn't stand the deceit

BOOBNOFF

*(Sullen )* All of it's made up

PEPEL

M-yes so much for your land of righteousness  
it wasn't to be found

NATASHA

I'm sorry for that man

BOOBNOFF

It's all—a story . . . Ho, ho ! the land of  
righteousness ! There's a notion ! Ho, ho, ho !

*(Disappears from window )*

LUKA

*(Nodding towards window )* 'E laughs ! Eh-  
hay-hay ! Well, children live in  
God ! I'll soon be leaving you

PEPEL

Where are yer off ?

LUKA.

To little Russia I'm told that they've  
found there a new faith 'ave to look into  
it yes ! People are always seeking and  
wishing—a better way God give 'em  
patience !

PEPEL

'Ow d'yer think—will they find it ?

LUKA

If people will ? They'll—find it ! Who wishes  
—finds who wishes strongly—finds !

NATASHA

If they'd found anything they'd 'ave  
arranged better than

LUKA.

They're arranging ! But they must be 'elped,  
little one they must be respected . . .

NATASHA.

'Ow can I 'elp? I'm without 'elp . . . for myself. . . .

PEPEL

(*Decisively*) Once more I'm . . . I'm going again ter talk ter yer . . . Natasha . . . It's—this—'e knows all. Come . . . with me!

NATASHA

Where? To prison?

PEPEL

I told you—I'll chuck thieving! God's truth—I'll chuck it! What I've said—I'll do! I can read and write . . . I'll work . . . Here's 'e been tellin' me to go to Siberia on my own hook . . . let's go together—eh? . . . D'yer think my life, it don't jar me? Ah, Natasha . . . I know . . . I see . . . I consoles myself because I see others steals more than me, and they live in honour . . . though they don't help me! It ain't that! I ain't repentin' . . . I don't believe in conscience . . . But this thing I *do* feel I must live . . . different! Must live better! Must live . . . so as I can be able to respect myself

LUKA

That's true, friend! God grant it . . . Christ 'elp yer! True a man ought to respect 'imself.

PEPEL.

I've been from my cradle a thief . . . all 'ave always said to me : " Vaska's a thief, the son of a thief." Aha ! Eh ? There it is ! Set down—a thief ! . . . Yer see . I might 'ave been a thief from badness—yes . . . but I 'ave been a thief because no one ever called me anythin' else . . . Say now . . . . Natasha, well ?

NATASHA.

(*Sorrowfully*) Some way, I don't believe  
not in any words . And I feels uneasy  
to-day . my 'eart's 'eavy . as though I  
was expectin' somethin' It's a pity, Vassil,  
you started on this to-day

PEPEL

But when then ? It isn't for the first time.

NATASHA

And where should I go with you ? As to . . .  
loving you I don't much love you . . .  
At times—you *do* please me then some-  
times I can't bear to see you when it's  
love . . . one sees nothing bad in one's sweet-  
heart . . . but I—see

PEPEL.

You'll love me—never fear ! I'll make you  
care . . . if only you'll say yes ! I've watched  
yer for over a year I see you're a straight

girl . . . good . . . a man yer can trust . . .  
'e loves yer very much. . . .

(VASSILISA, in her best dress, appears in  
the window and listens )

NATASHA

Well, you love me, but my sister . . .

PEPEL.

(*Agitated* ) Well, what of 'er? That sort  
they don't count

LUKA

Never mind that, girlie When yer can't get  
good bread, yer put up with stale stuff  
When there's no clean, good, fresh bread.

PEPEL

(*Gloomily* ) Per'aps yer might pity me My  
life's not soft a wolf's life—little joy in  
it like a man in a swamp and what-  
ever I catches at it's all rotten . no  
hold nowhere Your sister I thought  
different if she weren't so so 'ot after  
money—I'd gladly 'ave taken 'er for good  
and all ! If as she'd be mine altogether  
But she wants other things . She  
wants money and 'er own way and  
'er way is to—to go on the loose She—can't  
'elp me . But you're like a young fir-tree,  
and—it may rock, yet it 'olds firm .

LUKA.

And I say—you go with him, dearie, you go with 'im ! 'E's the right sort—a good lad ! And you just keep on remindin' 'im 'e's a good lad, so, I mean, as 'e shan't forget it 'E'll believe yer. . . . Only you say to 'im, "Vaska, it's certain that you're a good man . . don't forget it !" And think, too, dearie, where else is there you could go to?—um? Your sister, she's just a fierce beast—and 'er husband—what can one say of 'im? There's no words bad enough for the old man and all of this life 'ere—what can it lead to? But the lad's strong

NATASHA

Nowhere to go	I know	I've
thought of it.	Only it's this	I don't
believe nobody	But I've nowhere to go	
to .		

PEPEL

One way but that way I'll not let yer go . Sooner I'd kill yer

NATASHA

(*Smiling* ) There I'm not his wife yet, and already 'e's talkin' of killin'

PEPEL.

(*Putting his arm round her* ) Come, Natasha, say yer will !

NATASHA.

(*Pressing herself to him.*) But this one thing I say, Vaska . . . and I speak it before God !—the first time you strike me, or any way insult me, I'll either 'ang myself . . . or . . .

PEPEL.

May my 'and rot off, if I touches yer !

LUKA

It's all right, never doubt it, lovie. You're dearer to 'im than 'e to you .

VASSILISA.

(*Out of the window*) So that's arranged !  
A pretty love council !

NATASHA

She's there                      Oh Lord ! She's seen—ah,  
Vaska !

PEPEL.

What er yer frightened for? No one dare touch yer now !

VASSILISA

Don't fear, Natasha ! He'll not beat yer .  
'E can't beat, for 'e can't love .      I know !

LUKA.

(*Low.*)              Ah,      woman      . . . poisonous  
snake ! . . .

VASSILISA.

'E 'its yer with words. . . .

(KOSTOLOFF *enters.*)

KOSTOLOFF.

Natasha ! What er yer after 'ere, sluggard ?  
Tittle-tattling ? Grumbling at yer relatives ? And  
the samovar not ready ? the table not  
touched ?

NATASHA.

(*Going out* ) I thought you was goin' to  
Church . . .

KOSTOLOFF

That's none of your business where we're  
goin' ! Keep to your own business and  
do as yer ordered !

PEPEL.

Hold you ! She's no longer yer servant !  
Natasha, don't go don't do nothing !

NATASHA.

You stop ordering you're beginning a  
bit early !

PEPEL.

(*To KOSTOLOFF* ) So that's 'ow I get left  
. never mind ! Now she is mine !

KOSTOLOFF

Yours ? When did you buy 'er ? Fer 'ow  
much ?

(VASSILISA *laughs* )

LUKA.

Vaska !—you—be off . . .

PEPEL.

You're pleased to think it funny ! Maybe  
you'll learn that it's a cryin' matter !

VASSILISA

Oh, 'ow terrible ! Oh, ain't I terrified !

LUKA

Vassili—be off ! for see . she's drawing  
yer on working yer up—don't yer under-  
stand ?

PEPEL.

Yes aha ! She's lying you lie !  
You won't have it all your way !

VASSILISA

And it won't be the way that I don't want,  
Vaska !

PEPEL

(*Clenching his fist at her* ) We'll see !

(*Goes out* )

VASSILISA

(*Disappearing from window* ) I'll arrange you  
a wedding

KOSTOLOFF.

Well, my old man?

LUKA.

Just so, my old man! . .

KOSTOLOFF.

So . . you're going away, they say?

LUKA

Soon

KOSTOLOFF

Where?

LUKA

Where my eyes draw me

KOSTOLOFF

On the tramp, you mean      Ain't to yer  
taste, I see, stoppin' in one place?

LUKA

Under a firm stone no water flows, they say

KOSTOLOFF

That's—for a stone    But a man ought to live  
on one spot    Men ought not to live like beetles  
                 each one popping about just as ever 'e  
pleases    A man ought to settle 'imself in one  
place . . not wander at random over the  
earth.    .

LUKA.

But supposing that every place is his place?

KOSTOLOFF.

Why, that shows 'e's a tramp . . . a useless man . . . a man, 'e ought to be of use . . . he ought to labour. .

LUKA

Get on !

KOSTOLOFF.

Yes Consider a vagrant . what is he? A man apart a man not like others. . . Suppose 'e—a real pilgrim—knows somethin' that's no good to any one though it be true enough . . but there's not good in every truth . . yes ! Well, let 'im keep it to 'imself and—keep still ! If he's a real pilgrim, 'e—is silent But then 'e—'e don't wish for nothing, don't interfere, don't annoy people without reason 'Ow people live's none of 'is business 'E ought to follow a righteous life to live in the woods . in the fastnesses out of sight ! And interfere with no one, judge no one . but only pray for all for all the sins of the world . for mine for thine . for all It's for that 'e forsakes all earthly cares . . so as to pray And that's the way (Pause) But you . . what sort of a pilgrim are you? You've no passport a good man should 'ave a passport . . all good people 'as passports . . yes !

LUKA.

There are people, and then there are others  
that are men . . .

KOSTOLOFF

Won't do for me. Don't give me no riddles.  
. . I'm as clever as you . . What stuff—  
people and men !

LUKA

Where's the riddle? I say—there is ground  
that won't take seed and there's land that's  
fertile whatever you put in it—it grows  
. . and by that . .

KOSTOLOFF

What er yer gettin' at?

LUKA

Now thus, for example Suppose the  
Lord God 'Imself says, "Mikhail, be you a man !"  
. It's all settled without no bother  
. . . as you are—so you remain

KOSTOLOFF

But . . but—are you aware—my wife 'as an  
uncle—a policeman. And if I .

(VASSILISA comes in)

VASSILISA.

Mikhail Ivanitch, go and 'ave yer tea

KOSTOLOFF.

Here's fer yer ! get out of here ! clear out of this place !

VASSILISA

Yes, you get out, old man ! Your tongue's a sight too long                      yes, and 'oo knows you're not a runaway

KOSTOLOFF

From to-day take yer carcase off ! or else—look out !

LUKA

Call up uncle ! Call uncle . . think if 'e caught a runaway                      Uncle might get a reward                      three kopyeks

BOOBNOFF

(*At window* ) What's that for sale ? What's that fer three kopyeks ?

LUKA

It's me they're threatening to sell

VASSILISA

(*To husband* ) Come on

BOOBNOFF

For three kopyeks ? 'Why, you see, old man, they'd sell you for one

KOSTOLOFF.

You sprang up just like a devil from  
under the stove? (*Going with his wife*)

VASSILISA

What 'eaps of shady people in the world  
and every kind of swindlers

LUKA

Wish you a good appetite !

VASSILISA

(*Turning round*) Shut your mouth yer  
rotten toadstool !

(*Disappears with her husband round the  
corner*)

LUKA

This night—I'm off

BOOBNOFF

That's best Never outstay your welcome .

LUKA

You say true.

BOOBNOFF

I—know Maybe I'd be in prison, if I 'adn't  
gone off in time

LUKA

Um?

BOOBNOFF.

True. This way : my wife took up with the master. . . . To say truth, the master was all right . . . 'e was a rare 'and at changing dog's coat, re-dyin' it, into racoon . . . cat's too—into kangaroo . . . musk-rat . . . and all sorts. A knock out ! 'So you see—the wife took up with 'im . . . and they were that gone on one another that I feared they might poison me, or get me out of the world some'ow. So I beat the wife . . . and the master—me . . . We 'ad dreadful fights. Once 'e pulled out 'alf my beard and broke my rib. Then I'd get wild too . . . once I cracked my wife over the noddle with an iron yard . . . and altogether we was in the wars. 'Owever, I see—nothin' can come of all this . . . they get the best of it ! And then I thought to myself—I'd kill my wife. . . . thought of it powerful ! But I pulled myself up in time—and cleared off.

LUKA

That was the best ! Leave 'em to go on changing dogs into racoons !

BOOBNOFF

Only that the shop was in the wife's name . . . and I was left—as you see ! Though, to tell the truth, I'd 'ave drunk away the shop. For, yer see, I 'as those drinking spells. . .

LUKA

Drinkin' spells ? Ah !

BOOBNOFF.

The worst yer can ! Once I begin to put it down—I do in everything, leave nothin' but my skin. . . . What's more—I'm lazy. It's awful 'ow I 'ate work !

(SATINE and ACTOR enter quarrelling.)

SATINE.

Rot ! You won't go anywhere . it's a pack of lies Old man ! why did yer pour all that stuff into 'is ears ?

THE ACTOR

You lie ! Uncle ! tell 'im that 'e lies ! I—am going ! To-day I worked, swept the floor and took no vodka How's that ? Here they are—two five kopyeks, and I'm—sober !

SATINE.

You pack of fools ! Give it here, I'll drink it !

THE ACTOR

Get out ! That's all towards it

LUKA.

(To SATINE ) And you—why do you lead 'im away ?

SATINE.

Tell me, you magician, beloved of the gods—what's my life going to be ? Blown myself, I have, into smithereens ! \*But it's all gone yet, uncle—there are sharpeners in the world cleverer than me !

LUKA.

You're merry, Konstantine . . . agreeable !

BOOBNOFF

Actor ! Come along 'ere !

*(The ACTOR comes to the window, and sits  
in front of BOOBNOFF on the sill )*

SATINE

In early days, brother, I was a great wag It's  
good to remember ! One of the boys in my  
time danced splendidly—played on the  
stage—liked to amuse people fine

LUKA

'Ow did yer get out of yer bearings, eh ?

SATINE

Aren't you just curious, little old chappie ! You  
have to know all but—why ?

LUKA

I want to understand the ways of men  
and I look at you—I don't understand ! You're a  
bold fellow, Konstantine no fool . . . yet  
all at once

SATINE

Prison, daddy ! Four years and seven months  
did I sit in prison after the prison  
nowhere to go !

LUKA.

Oh-ho, ho ! What were you in for?

SATINE.

For a rascal                    I killed the rascal in a  
rage .                    and in the prison I learned to play  
cards .                    .

LUKA

Was the killing—for a woman?

SATINE.

For my own sister                    Anyhow—you come  
off it. I don't care for being questioned  
and                    all that happened long ago                    My  
sister—died                    nine years have passed since  
then                    Ah, brother, she was a real brick  
of a girl, my sister was

LUKA.

You take life easily ! Yet 'ere just now was  
the locksmith—'ow he did yell                    a1—a1—a1 !

SATINE

Klesshtsh?

LUKA

Yes                    " There's no work," 'e cries  
" there's nothing ! "

SATINE

He'll get used to it                    \*                    What shall I be  
up to now?

LUKA.

(*Softly.*) See ! 'ere he comes !

(KLESSHTSH *comes in slowly, his head bowed.*)

SATINE

Hey, widower ! What do yer hang yer head for ? What are you pondering ?

KLESSHTSH

Thinkin'                      what shall I do ? I've got no tools                      all gone for the funeral !

SATINE

I'll give you some advice                      do nothing !  
Simply dig up the world !

KLESSHTSH

That's what yer say                      I should be ashamed  
before men

SATINE

Come off ! Men aren't ashamed to let you live worse than a dog                      Think now—you stop working, I don't work                      and a hundred more thousands—all !—d'yer see ? All chuck work ! No one will do anything—then what'll happen !

KLESSHTSH.

They'll all die of hunger !

LUKA.

(*To SATINE.*) If these are your notions, you ought to go to the "fugitives" . . . there's a people they call the "fugitives" . . .

SATINE

I know . . . they're no fools, ancient .

(*NATASHA is heard from KOSTOLOFF'S window crying out, "What for? Stop! What 'ave I done?"*)

LUKA.

(*Agitated*) Natasha! It was her cryin'—  
Ah!

(*From the KOSTOLOFFS' apartment is heard noise, scuffling, the sound of broken crockery, and the shrill cry of KOSTOLOFF—"Ah! heretic! hag!"*)

VASSILISA

Wait a bit                      I'll teach her                      there,  
there! . . .

NATASHA

Beating me                      killing me

SATINE

(*Shouts in at the window*) Hi! in there! .

LUKA

(*In trepidation*) Vassili                      call 'im;  
call Vaska .                      Oh, Lord!                      Brothers .  
children!

THE ACTOR.

(*Running out*) Here, now. . . I'll find 'im  
at once!

BOOBNOFF

It's nothin' uncommon, their beatin' 'er.

SATINE

Come on, old man . . . we'll act as witnesses!

LUKA.

(*Following SATINE*) I ain't no sort of a  
witness! It's Vassili . . . quick and fetch  
'im .

NATASHA

Sister . . . sister, dear! . . . Va—a—a . . .

BOOBNOFF

They've stopped 'er mouth—I'll go and  
look

(*The noise in the KOSTOLOFFS' apartment  
diminishes, seems to die away as if  
they had gone out into the passage  
The cry of an old man is heard:  
"Stop!" The loud slam of a door,  
which seems, as it were, with a hatchet,  
to cut off all sound Quiet on the  
stage. Evening twilight*)

KLESSHTSH

(*Seated on the sledge, rubs his hands firmly  
together. Then begins to mutter something—*

*at first indistinguishable, then*)—'Ow, then? Must live. (*Aloud.*) Must have a roof . . . well? No roof . . . nothing! Man alone . . . alone—that's all. . . . No hope. .

*(Slowly he goes out)*

*(A few seconds of ominous silence, then, somewhere in the passage, a volume of sound, chaos of cries It increases and approaches Individual voices are distinguishable)*

VASSILISA

I'm her sister! Let me go

KOSTOLOFF

What right have you got——?

VASSILISA

Jail-bird!

SATINE

Call Vaska! quick—When—give it 'im!

*(A police whistle)*

*(TARTAR runs in, his right hand bandaged.)*

THE TARTAR.

'Ere's a pretty pass!—murder in broad daylight!

*(Enter WHEN, followed by MYEDVYEDYEFF)*

WHEN.

Ha ! I gave 'im one for 'imself !

MYEDVYEDYEFF.

You—you've been fighting, too ?

THE TARTAR.

And you ? Do yer own duty !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Feeling for his cord* ) Here ! give up my whistle. .

(KOSTOLOFF *runs in* )

KOSTOLOFF

Abraham ! Stop 'im ! . Seize 'im ! . . .  
It's murder !

(*From around the corner come KVASHNYA and NASTYA, supporting NATASHA, all dishevelled SATINE moves backwards towards the house, dragging VASSILISA, who is trying to get at her sister, ALYOSKA is leaping about her like a madman, whistling in her ears, shrieking, roaring Also other tattered persons—men and women* )

SATINE.

(*To VASSILISA* ) ' Would you ? you damned owl ! . . .

VASSILISA.

Let go, you jail-bird ! I'll tear you to pieces. .

KVASHNYA

(*Taking away NATASHA* ) Karpovna, leave off  
aren't you ashamed ? Er you mad ?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Seizes SATINE* ) Aha I've got yer !

SATINE.

When I flay 'em Vaska. Vaska

(*All are struggling in a mass near the passage, near the party wall They draw NATASHA away to the R, and set her down on the pile of wood* )

(*PEPEL rushes in and silently, with powerful movements, forces his way through them* )

PEPEL.

Where are you—Natasha ?

KOSTOLOFF

(*Getting behind the corner* ) Abraham ! Seize Vaska ! brothers, help • us . take Vaska ! Robber ! footpad !

PEPEL.

You—you old goat ! *(Violently swinging round, he strikes the old man )*

*(KOSTOLOFF falls so that only the upper part of his body is in sight PEPEL rushes to NATASHA )*

VASSILISA

Beat Vaska ! Good people ! . beat the robber !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

*(Cries to SATINE )* Let be this is a family matter ! They're relations . what er you ?

KVASHNYA

Look, look the savages ! They've scalded the child's poor feet

NASTYA

The samovar upset

THE TARTAR

Maybe an accident must 'ave the truth . mustn't talk wildly .

NATASHA

*(Half fainting )* Vassilisa . take me . . . save me . . .

VASSILISA.

Good folk ! look here ! look, see ! Dead !  
Murdered !

*(All gather round KOSTOLOFF in the  
passage BOOBNOFF comes out from  
the throng, goes to PEPEL )*

BOOBNOFF

*(Low)* Vaska ! the old man ! It's done now !

PEPEL

*(Looks at him, seems not to take it in )* Go  
and call take 'im to the hospital  
leave me to deal with them !

BOOBNOFF

I say—the old man—some one's finished  
'im.

*(The noise on the stage goes out like blaz-  
ing wood extinguished by water Sepa-  
rate half-whispered ejaculations. "Not  
really?" "Done it this time!"  
"Let's get out of it!" "Oh, the  
devil!" "Some one's in for it!" The  
crowd decreases )*

*(BOOBNOFF and the TARTAR go off )*

*(NASTYA and KVASHNYA rush to the body  
of KOSTOLOFF.)*

VASSILISA.

(*Getting up from the ground, cries out triumphantly*) Killed 'im! my 'usband . . . there's 'is murderer! Vaska murdered 'im! I saw it! Good people—I saw it! . . . And now—Vaska?—the police!

PEPEL.

(*Coming from NATASHA*) Take 'er away!  
(*Looks at the OLD MAN To VASSILISA*) Well? You're glad? (*Touches the body with his foot.*) Croaked the old dog! It's come your way. But can't I serve you the same? (*Rushes at her*)

(SATINE and WHEN pounce upon him—  
VASSILISA rushes into the passage)

SATINE

Hold on!

WHEN.

Proo! Where are you jumping to?

VASSILISA

(*Reappearing*) What, Vaska, darling friend? You've got to go on trial Police! Abraham! Whistle!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

They tore it away, the devils! . . .

ALYOSHA

Here it is! (*He whistles* MYEDVYEDYEFF runs after him.)

SATINE.

Vaska, don't funk ! Manslaughter—that's all it is—that's nothing ! That doesn't cost you much. . . .

VASSILISA

Hold Vaska ! 'E killed 'im . . . I saw 'im !

SATINE

I gave 'im three good taps                      Can't have needed much ! Call me as a witness, Vaska. . .

PEPEL

I don't want to acquit myself                      What I want's to bring Vassilisa in . . . and I will bring 'er into it She wished for it . . . she 'as urged me to kill 'er 'usband                      'as urged me to.

NATASHA

(Suddenly and loud ) Ah !—I understand. . . . So, Vassili ? Good people ! They are—at one ! My sister and—him                      they are at one ! They had arranged it all ! So, Vassili, that's why you talked to me to-night . . . so that she . . . might overhear it all ? Good people ! She is 'is lover . . . you know it . . . all know it . . . they are at one ! She . . . it was she got 'im to kill 'er 'usband . . . 'e was in their way . . . and I—was in their way. . . . See 'ow they've mangled me. . . .

PEPEL.

Natalya ! What d'yer say . . . what d'yer say ?

## SATINE

**The devil's in it all!**

## VASSILISA

You lie! She's lying! I . . . He,  
Vaska's the murderer!

**NATASHA**

They are—at one! Curse you both! Both  
of yer

## SATINE

'Ere's a muddle ! Take care, Vassili. They'll sink yer between 'em !

## WHEN

No understanding it                      What a world it is !

PEPEL

Natalya! No, it can't be you do really?—you can't believe that me and her

## SATINE

God's sake, Natasha, think what you're saying!

## VASSILISA

(*In the passage*) They've killed my 'usband  
 . . . Your worships . . . Vaska Pepel, a thief  
 . . . he 'as killed him, Mr Inspector I  
 —saw it, they all saw it .

NATASHA.

(*Her mind wandering.*) Good people . . . my sister and Vaska they're murderers! The police—you can 'ear them . . . it's she, it's my sister, she's urged him—persuaded him . . . her lover . . . there 'e is, the wretch . . . they are the murderers! Take them . . . judge. . . And take me to prison! For Christ's sake . . . let me go to prison! .

END OF THE THIRD ACT



## **THE FOURTH ACT**



## THE FOURTH ACT

SCENE —*Setting of First Act* PEPEL'S room is gone, the partition is broken, and in the place where KLESSHTSH sat there is no anvil

(*In the corner where PEPEL'S room was the TARTAR lies, moving and groaning from time to time Behind the table KLESSHTSH is seated, he is mending a concertina for a leak in the bellows At the other end of the table—SATINE, BARON, and NASTYA In front of them a bottle of vodka, three bottles of beer, a large hunk of black bread The ACTOR is turning about on the stove and coughing Night The scene is lighted by a lamp in the middle of the table Wind in the yard* )

KLESSHTSH

Y-yes during all of that shindy 'e cleared out

THE BARON

Vanished before the police Just like smoke dies before fire

SATINE

Just as evildoers flee the faces of the just !

NASTYA.

'E was good was the little old man ! . . . But  
you're not men . . . you're mildew !

THE BARON

(*Drinks* ) To your health, lady !

SATINE

An interesting old boy                      yes ! Nasturka  
here—she's fallen in love with him

NASTYA

In love with 'im                      and dead in love with  
'im ! 'Onest ! 'E saw                      everythin'  
understood everythin'

SATINE

(*Smiling* ) And on the whole                      he was  
good for a lot of yer                      like slops are when  
you've no teeth

THE BARON

(*Laughing* ) Or a plaster on a boil

KLESSHTSH

'E 'ad pity                      you 'asn't no pity

SATINE

Does it help yer if I pity yer ?

KLESSHTSH

You—may                      it's not that you should 'ave  
pity                      but it is that yer shouldn't give  
offence

THE TARTAR.

*(Sitting on the planks and nursing his damaged hand like a child )* The old 'un was good  
'ad the law in 'is soul ! 'Oo 'as the law in 'is  
soul's good. Lose the law—and yer done for !

THE BARON

What law, Prince ?

THE TARTAR

Just . different ones you know  
just .

THE BARON

What then ?

THE TARTAR

Don't offend people—there's the law !

SATINE

We call that “The code of punishments,  
criminal and correctional ”

THE BARON

And, moreover—“an act for the regulation of  
punishments to be inflicted by justices of the  
peace ”

THE TARTAR

Koran tells your Koran ought to be yer  
law. . The soul ought to be the Koran  
Yes !

KLESSHTSH.

(*Testing concertina* ) Wheezes, wheezes, damn  
it ! but the Prince 'e says right . must  
live—by the law by the gospel .

SATINE

Live it . .

THE BARON

Try it

THE TARTAR

Mahomet gave the Koran , 'e said 'Ere's—the  
law ! Do as it's written there Then in course  
of time—the Koran's not enough time gives  
its own law, a new law Each time gives  
its own law

SATINE

Just so Time went by and gave “ a code  
of punishments ” . A strong law you  
won't soon get rid of it

NASTYA

(*Bangs her glass on the table* ) And what  
for . why do I live here with you ? I'll go  
away . go off to some place to the end  
of the world !

THE BARON

In your slippers, lady ?

NASTYA

Naked ! On all fours !

THE BARON.

Quite a picture, lady . . . if on all fours. . .

NASTYA.

Yes, I'll crawl ! If it's only not to have to  
look at your mug Ah, 'ow it all revolts me !  
All life all people !

SATINE.

Go on, and take the Actor with yer 'e's  
off on some goose chase he's learned that,  
at exactly half a verst from the end of the world,  
there's a 'ospital for organons

THE ACTOR

(*Getting up from the stove* ) Or-ga-nisms—  
yer fool !

SATINE

For organons poisoned with alcohol .

THE ACTOR

Yes, he'll go ! he'll go ! just see !

THE BARON

He—who, monsieur ?

THE ACTOR

I !

THE BARON

Merci, servant of the Goddess what's 'er  
name ? The Goddess of plays, of tragedy .  
what on earth's she called ?

## THE ACTOR

The Muse, idiot ! Not a Goddess—but—a  
Muse !

## SATINE

Hera            Aphrodite            Atropos            to  
'ell with em ! It's all the old man            that's  
screwed it into the Actor            d'yer see, Baron ?

## THE BARON

The old 'un's—an ass

## THE ACTOR

Clods ! Goths ! Mel-po-me-ne ! Heart-  
less creature, you shall see—he'll go ! “ Get ye  
hence, ye dismal spirits ”            verses of Béranger  
yes ! He'll find 'im a place where there's  
no            na

## THE BARON

No, anything, monsieur !

## THE ACTOR

Yes ! Nothing ! “ That ditch shall be my  
tomb, sick and exhausted I die ”            Why do  
you live ? Why ?

## THE BARON

You ! “ Kean or genius and excess ”            don't  
bellow !

THE ACTOR

You lie ! I will bellow !

NASTYA

*(Looking up from the table, wrings her hands )*

Shriek ! Let 'em listen !

THE BARON

I don't quite take you, lady !

SATINE

Quiet, Baron ! Oh, 'ell ! Let 'em shout  
split their own ears let 'em ! That's  
sense, too Don't 'inder folk, as the old  
man put it yes, yer know, that old bird  
he's just turned all our people's heads

KLESSHTSH

'E pointed 'em some place , and then—  
never showed 'em the way

THE BARON

The old 'un was a humbug

NASTYA

You lie ! You're a 'umbug yerself !

THE BARON

Silence, lady !

KLESSHTSH

The truth 'e didn't like it, the old 'un

didn't. 'E stood firm against the truth . . . and right 'e was ! Yes—where's there truth 'ere ? But without it—yer can't breathe . . . Look at the Prince there . . . 'e's spoiled 'is 'and workin' . . . 'e'll 'ave to 'ave 'is 'and sawed off, see now . . . and there's some of yer truth !

### SATINE

(*Striking his hand on the table*) Silence ! You're all of yer—cattle ! Boys—shut up about the old man ! (*Calmer*) You, Baron—are the worst of all ! Not a thing do yer understand and—yer lie ! The old 'un's no hum-bug ! What is—the truth ? Man—there's the truth ! He understood that you—don't ! You're—as dead as bricks I understand the old man yes He lied but out of pity fer you, devil take yer ! There's lots of people that lie out of pity for their neighbours

I—know ! I've read ! Beautifully, inspiredly, affectingly they lie ! There's the consoling lie, the preceptive lie the lie to justify the burden that crushes the hand of the labourer to lay blame on the starving. I —know about lies ! The weak of spirit and them that live on the sap of others—it's them that need lying . . . some it supports, and others—it screens But him—that's his own master . . . who don't depend on others and don't feed on others why should he lie ? Lying's the religion of slaves and masters Truth's the God of the free man !

## THE BARON.

Bravo ! Finely spoken ! I—agree ! You talk  
—like a decent man !

## SATINE

Shan't a rogue sometimes speak the truth,  
when decent folk so often talk like rogues ?  
I've forgotten a lot, but—I shall know something !  
The old 'un ! He had brains                      He  
worked on me like acid does on a dirty old coin  
Let's drink to his health ! Fill up

(NASTYA *pours out a glass of beer and gives  
it to SATINE    He laughs* )

## SATINE

The old man lives his own way                      looks at  
everything through his own eyes    Once I asked  
him    “Daddy ! why are men alive ?”

(*Trying to speak in LUKA'S voice and to  
imitate his demeanour* )

“Why—they live for the better man, dearie !  
Now, let's say, there's carpenters and the rest—  
masses—people                      And then out of them a  
carpenter's born                      a carpenter such as never  
was in all the world    above 'em all    never  
was his like fer carpent'ring    'E stamps 'imself  
on the whole carpent'ring trade                      shoves the  
whole thing twenty years forward. . . And so  
for all the others . . . Locksmiths then .  
bootmakers and other working folk . . . and all  
the agriculturals . . . and even the gentry—they

live for the better man ! Each thinks 'e's livin' fer 'imself, yet it turns out it's for that better man. A 'undred years and maybe longer, we 'as to go on livin' till the better man ! "

(NASTYA looks fixedly into SATINE'S face  
KLESSHTSH stops working at the concertina, and also listens The BARON, with his head lowered, drums with his fingers softly on the table ACTOR has got off the stove )

SATINE

" All, dearie boy, all in their way live for the better man ! Therefore you must show respect unto all it's clear we can't know who 'e is, why 'e was born, and what 'e can do 'e may have been born for our 'appiness to bring us 'elp And the most of all that we must respect children the little bits of mites ! For the little children—there must be no cramping ! Never interfere with the children respect the mites ! " (*Pause* )

THE BARON

(*Thoughtfully* ) M-yes For the better man? So it was in our family an old family of Catherine's time Noblemen originally French In the service rose and rose Under Nicholas, my grandfather, Gustave Debille, held a high post Riches Hundreds of serfs horses . . . cooks

NASTYA

Lies ! 'E never did !

THE BARON

(*Leaping up* ) What ? Well and after !

NASTYA

'E never did !

THE BARON

(*Shouts out* ) A house in Moscow ! A house  
in Petersburg ! Carriages with coats-of-  
arms

(*KLESSHTSH takes the concertina, gets up,  
and goes to one side, from where he  
watches the scene* )

NASTYA

Never 'ad !

THE BARON

Silence ! I say ten footmen !

NASTYA

(*With exultation* ) N-never 'ad !

THE BARON

I'll kill you !

NASTYA

(*Preparing to run* ) There was no carriages !

SATINE

Stop, Nasturka ! Don't rile 'im

THE BARON.

Just wait, yer spawn ! My grandfather . .

NASTYA

'Ad no gran'father ! 'Ad nothin' !

(SATINE *laughs* )

THE BARON

(*Worn out with rage sits on the bench* )  
Satine, tell 'er the slut You, too  
. you're laughing ! You too—don't  
believe me ? (*Cries in despair, pounding his fists*  
*on the table* ) It's true, damn you all !

NASTYA

(*Triumphant* ) A-ah, got 'im D'yer know  
now 'ow it is when people won't believe yer ?

KLESSHTSH

(*Returning to table* ) I thought there'd be a  
fight

THE TARTAR

Ah ! Silly folk ! Very bad !

THE BARON

I won't let myself be jeered at. I've  
got proofs, documents, damn it !

SATINE

Stole them ! And forget about your uncle's  
carriages in a carriage that was you can't  
go anywhere.

THE BARON

That she should dare, anyhow !

NASTYA

D'yer hear 'im? Should dare !

SATINE

'E's only laughing ! How's she any worse than you? Though in her past we'll take it that she's had no carriages and—grandfathers, or even a father and mother

THE BARON

(*Growing calmer*) Devil take yer !  
you're able to judge things coolly  
But it seems time I've no strength of  
character

SATINE

Get some ! It's of use (Pause )  
Nastya, er yer going to the hospital?

NASTYA

Why?

SATINE

To Natasha

NASTYA.

What er yer thinking of? Been out long since  
. came out and—disappeared ! No findin'  
'er. . . .

SATINE.

That's to say—she's a goner.

KLESSHTSH

It's interestin' to see who's goin' to floor which?  
Vaska—Vassilisa, or she him?

NASTYA

Vassilisa'll win! She's cunning But Vaska  
—he'll go to penal servitude

SATINE

For manslaughter—only to prison .

NASTYA

Pity You're better off—in penal servitude  
. That's where yer ought all to be in  
penal servitude all mixed up together  
all mixed up like rubbish in the  
dust-hole

SATINE

(*Astonished*) What are you saying? Are  
you mad?

THE BARON

Now I'm just going to give her one for  
her insults!

NASTYA

Try it! Touch me!

THE BARON

I'll try it!

SATINE.

Let be ! Don't touch her . . give no offence to folk ! I can't get him out of my head—that old man ! (*Laughs* ) Give no offence to folk, and if a man does me an offence—what I call a life-long offence—what then ? Forgive ? Nothing ! No matter !

THE BARON

(*To NASTYA* ) You ought to know that I'm—I'm on a different level to you ! You . . muck !

NASTYA

Ah, you poor wretch ! Why you . . you live on me like a worm does in a little apple !

(*Laughter of the men* )

KLESSHTSH

You . . stupid ! A little apple !

THE BARON

You can't . . be angry . . she's such an idiot !

NASTYA

Laughing ? That's a lie too ! You don't find it funny !

THE ACTOR

(*Gloomily* ) Thrash 'em !

NASTYA.

If only I . . could ! I'd give yer .

*(Takes cup from table and throws it on  
the ground )*

that's 'ow !

THE TARTAR

Why break the crockery? La yer  
ninny !

THE BARON

*(Getting up )* No, now I'm goin' to  
teach her manners

NASTYA

*(Running away )* Go to the devil !

SATINE

*(After her )* Here ! Stop ! What are you  
running for ?

NASTYA

Wolves ! may yer choke ! yer wolves !

THE ACTOR

*(Gloomily )* Amen

THE TARTAR.

O-o She's a bad woman—the Russian  
woman ! Scolding wilful ! Not the Tartar woman  
—the Tartar woman knows the law !

KLESSHTSH

Give 'er a shaking

THE BARON

The huzzy !

KLESSHTSH

(*Trying the concertina* ) Finished ! But 'er  
master didn't come for 'er 'E's on the  
loose

SATINE

Come on—drink !

KLESSHTSH

Thanks ! Bedtime soon

SATINE

Are you getting used to us ?

KLESSHTSH

(*Having had a drink, goes over to the corner  
where his planks are* ) It's all right  
Everywhere—there's men at first—yer don't  
see that then—you look round, you find  
that they're all men it's all right !

(*The TARTAR spreads something on his  
planks, goes on his knees, and prays* )

THE BARON

(*Pointing the TARTAR out to SATINE* ) Look !

SATINE.

Stop! He's a good chap . . . Let him alone! (*Laughs*) I to-day—am good . Devil knows why!

THE BARON

You're always good when you're drunk—and clever

SATINE

When I'm drunk I like everything Yes  
 He—prays? Fine! A man can believe or not believe . that's his affair! A man is free . he pays for everything himself! . for belief, for unbelief, for love, for wisdom A man pays everything himself, and therefore is—free! The man—that's the truth! What is man? It's not you, not me, not them—no! It's you, I, them, the old 'un, Napoleon, Mahomet in one! (*Draws in the air the face of a man with his finger*) D'yer see? That's prodigious! In that is the beginning and end of all All is—in man, all for man! There exists only man, all the rest—is the work of his hands and of his brains! Man! That's magnificent! That sounds mighty Mankind! You must respect mankind! Not pity him not lower him with pity must respect him! Let's drink to Mankind! Baron! (*Gets up*) It's good—to feel yourself a man! I'm a ticket-of-leave, a murderer, a scoundrel—yes, I am! When I walk the streets people eye me for a

crook . . . and they draw away, and they glare after me, and they often say to me, "Loafer ! black-guard ! work ! work !" Why ! To fill my belly ? (*Laughs*) I've always despised people who worry too much about stuffing themselves It isn't that, Baron ? That isn't it Man is higher than that Man is higher than repletion !

## THE BARON

(*Nodding his head*) You're getting at it  
                   that's prime                   that's the thing to warm  
 one's heart I haven't got that I don't  
 know how ! (*Looks round—then softly, cau-*  
*tiously*) I, brother, I'm afraid                   sometimes  
 D'you see ? Get in a funk                   because—what  
 after ?

## SATINE

Rubbish ! There's nothing that a man should fear ?

## THE BARON

Yer know                   from when first I can remem-  
 ber                   there's been inside my noddle a sort  
 of fog Never anything have I understood I'm  
 . . in some way—I'm clumsy It seems to  
 me all my life I've done nothing but dress up  
                   and why ? Went to school—wore the uni-  
 form of the Institute for the Sons of the Nobility  
 . . but what did I learn ? Don't remember  
 . . Married—in a frock-coat, and an over-  
 coat                   but I picked out the wrong wife and—  
 why ? Don't understand                   . Squandered all I

had, wore some sort of a grey pea-jacket and red trousers but where did it all get to? Never noticed Entered the Court of Exchequer uniform, and a cap with a cockade made away with some Government money—they put me into the convict's gown then—I got into this lot here And all like in a dream ah? That's funny

SATINE

Not very I should say—stupid. . .

THE BARON

Yes and I think it's stupid But I must have been born for some reason Eh?

SATINE

(*Smiling*) Probably Man is born for the better man! (*Shaking his head*) So it's all right!

THE BARON

That Nastya! Where's she run off to? I'll go, and see where she is? For after all she

(*Goes out A pause*)

THE ACTOR

Tartar! (*Pause*) Prince!

(*The TARTAR turns his head*)

THE ACTOR.

For me . . . pray

THE TARTAR.

Why?

THE ACTOR

Pray for me

THE TARTAR

(*After a silence* ) Pray yerself !

THE ACTOR.

(*Gets quickly from the stove, goes to the table, pours himself some vodka with trembling hands, drinks, and almost runs into the passage* ) I'm off !

SATINE

Hi, you, off where ?

(*Enter MYEDVYEDYEFF in a wadded woman's jacket, and BOOBNOFF, both drunk, but not very drunk In one hand BOOBNOFF is carrying a packet of cracknels, he has a bottle of vodka in one armpit, and another sticking out of the pocket of his pea-jacket* )

MYEDVYEDYEFF

A camel—it's a kind of a donkey ! Only with no ears .

BOOBNOFF

Chuck it ! Yerself—yer a kind of a donkey

MYEDVYEDYEFF

A camel, it hasn't got no ears at all .  
it—hears with its nostrils .

BOOBNOFF

(To SATINE ) Chum ! I've been looking for  
yer in all the trakteers—all the stills ! Take  
the bottle, all my 'ands is full !

SATINE

You—put the cracknels on the table, then you'll  
have one hand free

BOOBNOFF

True ! You're right                      Jumble, look at it  
all ! So there, eh?                      Wire boy

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Sharpers                      they're all clever . I  
know ! They 'ave got to be clever A good  
man he—may be stupid and good, but a wrong  
'un, 'e's bound to 'ave wits But, about the camel,  
yer know                      yer can get me up on 'im  
'e 'asn't no 'orns, not no teeth

BOOBNOFF

Where's every one? Why's there no one 'ere?  
'Ere, get up                      it's my treat !

SATINE

You'll soon drink all *you've* got, blockhead !



BOOBNOFF

Soon, yer say? This time I've gathered some capital—a little pile When! Where's When?

KLESSHTSH

(*Going to table*) Not here

BOOBNOFF

Ooo-r-r! Yer peacock! Don't bark, don't growl! Drink, be jolly, don't turn yer nose up  
I treats everybody! Why, mates, I loves to stand treat! If I was rich . I'd  
I'd build a free trakteer! Yes, my God! With music, and a troupe of singers Come,  
drink, eat, listen to the singers gladden yer  
'earts A man's a sad creature come along  
to me to my free trakteer! Satine! For you  
you 'ere, take 'alf of all my capital!  
This way!

SATINE

Give it me all in a lump!

BOOBNOFF

The 'ole capital? At once? Right! Then  
here's a rouble and here's a twenty  
kopyeks a five kopyeks a two kopyeks  
all .

SATINE

That'll do! It's safer with me I'll play cards  
with it!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

I am—a witness            the money is placed in  
your keepin'            'ow much is it?

BOOBNOFF

You? You're a camel            we want no wit-  
nesses

ALYOSHKHA

(*Comes in barefooted* ) Fellows ! my feet are  
soaking

BOOBNOFF

Go and soak yourself            only all over ! I  
like you You sing and you play            that's  
very good ! But, drinking—that's a poor game !  
That does 'arm, brother , drinking does 'arm !

ALYOSHKHA

Why, I look at yer ! And it's only when yer  
drunk yer anythin' like a man            Klesshtsh !  
My concertina—mended ? (*Dances, and sings* )

*If my nozzle weren't so bonny,  
Then my gossip wouldn't love me*

I'm frozen, fellows ! Cold !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Um            If one wa's to ask            'Oo is that  
gossip?

BOOBNOFF

Keep still You're no one now, brother  
You're no "bobby" in these days . you're  
done with ! No "bobby" nor no uncle

ALYOSHKA

You're just—auntie's darling hubby !

BOOBNOFF

One of yer nieces is—in gaol, the other's  
dyn'—

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Proudly* ) Yer lie ! She's not dyn' she's  
disappeared without tellin' no one !

(SATINE *laughs* )

BOOBNOFF

All the same, brother ! A man with no niece—  
'e's not an uncle !

ALYOSHKA

Your Excellency ! The retired drum-major !

*My gossip—has 'er savings,  
And I've not got a penny'  
Oh, aren't I a merry boy?  
Oh, I am so good'*

It's cold !

(WHEN *enters, then—until the end of the  
act—some other male and female  
figures They 'undress, get on to the  
planks, snore* )

WHEN

Boobnoff? What made yer 'ook it?

BOOBNOFF

Come 'ere! Sit down let's sing, mate!  
My beloved eh?

THE TARTAR

In the night yer must sleep! Sing songs in  
the day!

SATINE

That's all right, Prince You—come here!

THE TARTAR

How—all right? There'll be a noise  
When there's singing, it means a noise

BOOBNOFF.

(*Going to him*) Prince! 'ow's—yer 'and?  
'Ave they cut it off?

WHEN

Means the gutter for you, Hassan! Without  
a hand—what er yer good for? A man's valued  
by 'is 'ands and 'is back No hand—no  
man! Go and drink! Nothing like it!

(*KVASHNYA comes in*)

KVASHNYA

Ah, my dear good people! Out in the yard, out  
in the yard! The cold, the slush—is my man  
here? Mannie!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Me?

KVASHNYA

Got on my jacket again and it seems  
to me a bit on, ah? What d'yer mean  
by it?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

On account of the birthday Boobnoff  
and—the cold the slush!

KVASHNYA.

Look at me the slush! No foolery  
Come to bed

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Going into the kitchen*) Sleep, yes I  
will I want to it's time!

(*Exit*)

SATINE

Why are yer so beastly strict with him?

KVASHNYA

It's the only way, my friend A man like  
'im 'as got to be kept strict We keep 'ouse  
together, now, I thought 'e would be a 'elp to  
me seen' as 'e's 'ad discipline, but you—  
you're a disorderly crew . I've got my

woman's view            let 'im go gettin' drunk  
That don't suit my book !

SATINE.

You've chosen your help wrong

KVASHNYA

No—better than you            you'd never live  
with me            a fellow like you ! I'd see yer  
one week in twnty            you'd gamble away me  
and my very insides !

SATINE

(*Laughs*)    That's true, my girl ! I  
would

KVASHNYA

So now ! Alyoshka !

ALYOSHKA

Yes—here am I !

KVASHNYA

What's this you've been saying about me ?

ALYOSHKA

I ? No 'arm I've said, there, I've said, there's  
a woman ! Wonderful woman ! Flesh, fat bones  
—good forty stone, and brains—not a ha'porth !

KVASHNYA

And there you're wrong ! I've got a deal of brains No, and why did yer say that I beat my man ?

ALYOSHKHA

I thought that was beatin' 'im when you seized 'old of 'is 'air

KVASHNYA

(*Smiling* ) Fool ! Then just you don't see ! Why do you carry tales out of school ? And yer 'urt 'is feelin's too It's cause of your talk 'e's took to drinkin'

ALYOSHKHA

Then the sayin's true, then, even a bear likes drink !

(KLESSHTSH and SATINE *laugh* )

KVASHNYA

You're a pretty sort of man, you are, Alyoshka !

ALYOSHKHA

I'm the very first superfine sort of man for any job ! I just go where my eyes lead me !

BOOBNOFF

(*By the TARTAR'S planks* ) Come along ! It's no use they'll not let us sleep ! Come and drink the night through, When !

WHEN.

Drink? Why not .

ALYOSHKA

And I'll play to yer !

SATINE

Let's 'ear yer !

THE TARTAR

Well, Boobnoff, yer devil—fetch the wine !  
We'll drink, we'll rollick—death comes  
we've got to die !

BOOBNOFF

Pour 'im out, Satine ! When, squat ! Ah,  
pals ! Does a man want much ? I've drunk a  
bit and—happy ! When ! Strike me lad !  
I'll sing I'll pay !

WHEN

(Sings )

*The sun it rises and it sets*

BOOBNOFF

(Going on )

*In my prison all is dark'*

(The door is opened suddenly BARON on  
the threshold )

## THE BARON

Hi .        you ! Go .        go over there ! On  
the waste        out there        the Actor .  
he's hanged himself !

*(Silence All look at the BARON NASTYA  
appears behind his back, and slowly,  
with wide-opened eyes, goes over to  
the table )*

## SATINE

*(In a low voice )* Ah        he's spoiled the  
song        the fool !

THE END

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